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LIVING AUTHORS OF AMERICA

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LIVING AUTHORS

OF

AMERICA.

First Series.

BY

THOMAS POWELL,
AUTHOR OF "THE LIVING AUTHORS OF ENGLAND,"
&c., &c.

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TO

R. E. MOUNT, JR.,

AND

JOHN ANDREW, ESQRS.,

THIS

VOLUME IS DEDICATED

BY

The Author.

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INTRODUCTION.

ACCUSTOMED for many years to associate with the most distinguished men in English literature, the conclusions we have formed upon various subjects may rather be considered theirs than our own.

Youth is so imitative that we often become the unconscious plagiarists of others, even of men whom we secretly despise, and whose decision we should refuse to accept, when the truth is that we ourselves are uttering their sentiments, modified by our own egotism.

The origin of every thought is so obscure, that it may be doubted whether any man living can claim the individuality of his opinions, however firmly he may exclusively consider them his own.

American literature has of late years been a favorite subject of discussion with the critical circles of London, and the works of the best authors of the Great Republic are as familiar to the well-informed classes of England as the writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and their contemporaries, to the enlightened Americans. The alacrity with which an English audience welcomes an author or a lecturer from the New World is too well

known to need any proof: it has been acknowledged openly, since his return from the Fatherland, by one of the most illustrious of republicans, the poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson.

We do not seek by this plea to shelter ourselves, or to expect that it will secure to the views set forth in this book any deference not justly due to the opinions themselves; we merely make this avowal to account for the fact of our having presented these critical judgments to the public. With regard to the manner, we have not aimed at anything beyond a conversational style, which has no pretension to challenge comparison with a professed author.

Independently of this consideration, we may, perhaps, be permitted to state that our Poems and Plays have been well received by the English public, and favorably reviewed in the leading journals of London, among others by the New Quarterly, Church of England Quarterly, Athenæum, &c. We may likewise refer to the publication of "Chaucer Modernized," in which undertaking our friends Wordsworth, Leigh Hunt, Horne, &c., cheerfully allowed us to partake.

We think it due to the American public to make this statement, lest we should be accused of a certain presumption in thus critically considering the Authors of America. It must, however, be borne in mind, that possibly an Englishman familiar with their writings, is capable of arriving at a far juster estimate of their relative merits, than one of their own countrymen who may be swayed by personal or political bias.

Removed from this disturbing influence, he becomes better

qualified to sum up impartially the excellences or defects of an author than one who has been himself mixed up with him.

The causes which operate on us are so subtle, that it is utterly impossible to come in contact with men without being influenced one way or the other by this personal familiarity: and when to this is added the fact of political or religious agreement or disagreement, the author is placed under a medium which either distorts or flatters.

We are aware it may be urged by some narrow-minded persons on the other hand, that the national prejudice which is too often taken for granted, may likewise prove an obstacle in the way of an impartial judgment; but the advancing liberality of the age will render this the opinion of a very small class, and we have only noticed the possibility of such a charge, to show that it has not escaped our attention, and to state that our volume will effectually refute such a suspicion.

We presume that the right to give an opinion cannot be disputed, seeing that it is assumed and exercised by every newspaper critic in the world.

We trust to the indulgence of our readers for this egotistical statement, which has been forced from us by sundry parties connected with the American press, who have questioned our ability to form a literary opinion at all: we do not name this out of deference to that class of journalists, but chiefly as an apology for venturing to speak thus *ex cathedrâ*.

With this explanation, we lay our remarks on the most eminent authors of this Great Nation before our readers, reiterat-

ing that, owing to our having so frequently heard their merits discussed by the most distinguished critics of England, the views expressed in this book may rather be considered the result of their deliberations than our own individual opinion.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.

Mr. Cooper, who is considered by many as the head of American literature, was undoubtedly the first whose writings gave it a prominent position in the eyes of Europe, his works having been translated into several of the continental languages.

Till his time the literature of this vast Republic was rather Colonial than National; for without intending any invidious comparison, Mr. Irving must be considered more of an English classic than an American author. We are not aware of any passage in his numerous writings which an Englishman might not have thought and written; but in Mr. Cooper we have throughout the most unmistakable evidences of the Republican and the American. We are not sure but that he very unnecessarily, if not offensively, forces this upon our attention. We do not make this as a complaint against either of these distinguished writers, but merely point out the fact to the attention of our readers. With this preliminary observation we shall enter upon the consideration of Mr. Cooper's writings.

Mr. Cooper first secured his hearing with the public, by his historical novel "the Spy," the scene of which is laid in New York; this, though deficient in that more stirring incident

which distinguished some of his later works, contains some admirable scenes, and well entitled him to that respectful attention he enjoyed for many years. In this, he singularly developes the peculiarities of his nature, which are so strikingly displayed in most of his after productions. It is curious to observe how very much the ingredients of his novels resemble each other; and how very early he fell into that amplitude of execution which has been so great a drawback on his success.

Of late years, Mr. Cooper's novels remind us of Mr. Canning's illustration of Brougham's incessant advocacy of reform, which the facetious statesman said was ever brought forward as a nostrum for all evils. Was there an epidemic? try Reform in parliament, cried Mr. Brougham!—was there an earthquake? it was all occasioned by the aristocracy, in refusing reform to the people! Mr. Canning said there was a parallel case in the monomania of a young village painter, of whom he had read when a boy.

He had succeeded in painting to the perfect satisfaction of Boniface, the sign of a Red Lion, which adorned a village alehouse of that name. The squire of the hamlet, anxious to encourage rising merit, sent for the youthful Raffaelle, and said that he wished him to embellish with pictures a few panels in his great oak dining-room. "Here," he observed, "is a large space over the fire hearth—what do you suggest as the best subject?" The painter put on a profound air, rubbed his chin in all the agony of cogitation—looked up at the panel—then down on the ground—and then in a very oracular tone of voice said, "My deliberate opinion is, that nothing will so well be-

come that space as a very large Red Lion! what does your worship think?" The squire seemed somewhat surprised at first, but acquiesced, and at last began to think it a Red Lion very well drawn, and colored, and in an extra rampant attitude, might after all be a very striking object on entering his Hall. It would have been better had that been the family crest, but as that emblem of Heraldic distinction happened to be an owl, and as no ingenuity on the part of the painter could reasonably be expected to make a red lion altogether like a bird, why it could not be helped.

This little difficulty thus satisfactorily arranged to both patron and painter, they proceeded to the other end of the room, and there the squire put the same question as to what would be the most becoming to the opposite panel: here, however, there was some difference, as the space was much smaller. The artist now buried himself in the profoundest reverie; while he stood thus lost in abstraction, the squire said to himself, "Ah! now we shall have a subject worthy of Salvator Rosa, Murillo, and Rubens! His mind is now ransacking history and romance, for some stirring subject to astonish all my friends: I like the idea, after all, of that Red Lion for the fire hearth: there is something touchingly simple in it—a truly noble idea. The lion is the king of the forest:--a bold idea, and shows the man of original mind." He was himself aroused from his brown study by the voice of the other saying, "I have it at last;—what say you of another Red Lion—smaller than the other, but made very much *redder*, in order to compensate for the loss of dimensions: it will make an admirable companion picture." The squire now found that he proposed

to fill up all the spaces with the same animal, and so convert his Hall into a gallery of Red Lions.

Mr. Cooper has some little spice of our artist's weakness, and is somewhat too fond of Red Indians, diversifying them by occasionally painting some much *redder* than others.

There is likewise too great a similarity in his plots; we have the same scenes over and over again, until at length we seem to have lost our path in a primeval forest of novels, out of which it is almost impossible to read our way.

The greatest charm about Cooper's novels is the perfect truthfulness of their forest scenery; there is nothing artificial in a single word—the very trees seem to grow around you: it is not scene painting, it is nature. In many of Bulwer's novels we cannot shake off the feeling that the whole is theatrical: we acknowledge the picture, but we see it by the light of the foot-lamps. It is very good, certainly, but it is not life. We cannot do better than illustrate this by an anecdote we once heard of a very acute critic. A party of friends one evening were discussing the acting of the elder Kean and his son; all agreed in praising the felicity with which the son imitated the father: one went so far as to declare he saw little difference between them. This called up our critic, who said he would endeavor to describe the difference. "Let us select," said he, "the celebrated tent scene of Richard the Third: it is, of all others, that in which the younger is the most successful in imitating the elder one. When I saw old Edmund lying on the couch, writhing as it were beneath all the horrors of a guilty conscience, his restless and disturbed action told me more than words: when, finally, under the paroxysm of the terrible dream, he

starts up, and staggers to the very brink of the orchestra, my attention was riveted on the terrible picture before me—that was nature: I saw the remorseful conscience-stung tyrant, and him alone. But in the case of his son 'twas very different; true, he did it physically precisely as his father had done: nothing pantomimic was omitted, but the soul was wanting, and as he came reeling towards the audience, I said to myself, By heaven he will cut his knees upon the footlights." Thus differ Bulwer and Cooper.

With regard to his Indians, we have heard some Americans declare that they are not natural, but, as they termed them, Mr. Cooper's Indians: we can only speak as they impressed us. It must always be borne in mind that a novelist labors under a disadvantage when he is drawing human nature, which he does not when he is painting nature's scenery; as a matter of necessity, he must *exaggerate*, or, as they term it, *idealize* the living characters in his works. But it is not so with the scene he chooses to describe; he may be as literal as he pleases in the one case—then he is pronounced graphic, and wonderfully true to nature; but if he portrays with equal fidelity the beings he brings forth upon his canvas, he is condemned as tame and common-place. It thus requires a double power to produce a successful romance; and it is in this two-fold capacity that we consider Mr. Cooper so admirable a writer.

Even in the very worst of his novels, there are glimpses of nature so exquisitely painted as to justify the highest praise it is possible to bestow.

It is just probable that the very success of this description of writing has led Mr. Cooper to persevere in a course which has

exposed him to the charge of being considered a writer of limited range.

That the author of the "Pilot" succeeds best in forest scenes, and with Indians as actors, is undoubtedly true; but this applies in a certain sense to every distinguished author. That Mr. Cooper has narrowed his range by a too engrossing attention to a particular species of human life, is another question, which it is vain here to discuss. The predisposition of a writer for a particular kind of work is not always a proof that it is his *forte* —it may be, as Leigh Hunt once facetiously observed, his *piano;* inclination is not a good test of genius. It is too frequently the offspring of indolence and facility of execution. It is the common trick of humanity to avoid the toilsome and rugged road. All prefer the flowery path: what is difficult, becomes irksome: till, in time, the efforts become more and more rare, until at length they are altogether discontinued.

From this habit results the sameness of so many writers. They first, out of the impulse and love of adventure so inseparably connected with youth, force a way for themselves through the tangled thicket of those vague desires which invariably predicate the poetical mind. Proud of the achievement this path is retrod, and when the charm of novelty has died away, the momentum which formerly carried the young spirit on is lessened, and the beaten path is of course preferred to the labor of making another track in a new direction.

Mr. Cooper's novels of Mercedes of Castile and the Bravo of Venice, are evidences that he has tried other parts, but it by no means follows, because he has not succeeded equally well in these new phases, that he could not have done so. His Indian

Romances are numerous; his foreign ones are isolated efforts. He should have cultivated this vein, and worked out more of the material, and not abandoned the field at the first defeat. But it appears that he was laboring under the impression that his genius lay the other way; and, consequently, Mr. Cooper tired his public somewhat, by writing Backwood novels too pertinaciously.

He should also have been guided more by the experience of Sir Walter Scott than by his own Impulse, or what is worse, Self-will. For, while we admit that the genius of the British Novelist walks more steadily and naturally on the Heaths and Moors of Scotland, and lives evidently more at ease with the characters of his native land, he nevertheless excels every other writer of Romance in general subjects likewise; with the sole exception of the Supernatural, where Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis are unapproached. Scott is indisputably the most successful of the writers of fiction; but even he too frequently allows the facility with which he wrote dialogues in genuine Scotch to seduce him into tedious conversations, which weaken very materially the effect of his best scenes, by wearying the reader before the emphatic moment has arrived. It is very unartistic to jade the attention, as it destroys the keenness of appreciation when it is most required to heighten the effect of a denouement.

We have heard some critics lay this charge to the "three volume system," which, they maintain, compels them to adopt this superfluous writing to fill up the space; but we do not think this at all a valid reason. A careless or incompetent dramatist might charge the tediousness or irrelevant nature of

his writing upon the established custom of a Play having Five Acts. Every Romance and every Drama has a natural length, and the true artist never need write a superfluous word; symmetry is the truest beauty, and, like a circle, is complete in itself without any reference to size; so has a work of art, whether in poetry, philosophy, or science, a relative propriety individual to itself. The child is as perfect in its way as the Giant, and it would be absurd for either to deny to the other the possession of beauty, simply on account of difference of stature. The real dramatist will so apportion the incidents that the critical eye will at once recognise their affinity to each other, and the necessity for the existence of each, with as much logical readiness as the eye passes over the human frame, and at once detects a deficiency or superfluity of the limbs composing it.

Some authors seem to consider that if they have a great or striking catastrophe, any amount of feeble or discursive matter will be tolerated; but the absurdity of this is evident. What would be said of a sculptor, who, conscious of the workmanship of the face of his statue, considered the drapery, or the rest of the figure, unworthy of his elaboration! A very slight defect spoils the general effect, and the masses are more moved by the tout-ensemble than by the surprising finish of any individual part.

The coherency of a book is, in short, its life as well as its beauty. However finely worked out some parts of Mr. Cooper's "Bravo" may be, the improbability of the plot is too glaring to allow it a permanent existence. It opens well, the attention is aroused, and when we come to the death of the old

fisherman, we are fully convinced the romance is of first-rate pretensions ; but it dwindles as it progresses into a mere improbability, which irritates the more in proportion to the force and beauty of the opening scenes. Still, in these attempts, even a failure is more glorious than the successful achievement of countless sketches, which have nothing to recommend them beyond the carefulness of their finish ; it is a very safe and a very easy way to found a reputation upon the fidelity of minute description. What powers of mind are required to describe an elaborate duck, or a fat man getting into a coach, or the thousand and one other inanities in which some writers are considered so perfectly classical? What heart is roused by all this laborious trifling? Literature degenerates into a foible, and becomes a frivolous plaything, and not a great organ of instruction. No amount of personal exaggeration or flattery can ever elevate the most successful writer of this description into anything beyond a fifth-rate writer.

Mr. Cooper's wilfulness, which is apparent only by *implication* in his works of fiction, is very palpably developed in his travels. Here he places himself before the public as his own caricaturist, and insists upon his own condemnation by his readers. Still, even in this adverse position, the independence of his nature comes out nobly, and his republican steadiness contrasts very strongly with the placid amenities of Mr. Irving. Born ourselves under monarchical institutions, our national and natural prejudices are disposed to a favorable reception of any praise a foreigner —more especially a republican—may feel inclined to bestow upon England ; but we must admit, that the smiling benignity with which Mr. Irving surveys every evidence of aristocratical

power, gives us but a very poor opinion of either his sincerity or his republican feelings. He describes, with evident delight, the royal state of the English nobility; he has no eye to see the foundation of wrong and oppression on which that magnificent superstructure is reared. The baronial castles of the aristocracy of England have been reared by crimes and cruelties as revolting to humanity as the pyramid of Cheops, and we feel bound to add, that they are maintained in the same manner. We will not be so invidious as to go through Mr. Irving's writings, and collect in one spot all the fulsome flatteries on that exclusive class which he has so plentifully bestowed; we merely appeal to the reader's impression, and may state, as a confirmation of the truth of our remarks, that this very peculiarity has been converted by many into a merit, and claimed as an evidence of this distinguished author's freedom from national prejudice, and willingness to do justice to all. As we shall enter more minutely into this subject when we come to treat of Mr. Irving under his proper head, we drop it for the present, remarking that we have here incidentally mentioned it as a contrast to the tone of Mr. Cooper's mind; and while one party claims freedom from nationality as a merit, we merely plead in behalf of Mr. Cooper his republican tendencies, as a possible extenuation in the eyes of the Americans.

This individuality has pursued our author through his life, and impelled him to some unpopular steps—among others, to his prosecution of the Press. We allow that it is a grievous trial of patience to be abused in the papers and held up to public scorn or censure, but the real parties to blame are not so much the journalists as their readers.

It is the public who is to blame; and the man who attacks the press might as well run his head against a wall, or spring from Niagara. The true wisdom is not to heed it; nothing prolongs the barking of a cur at your heels so much as turning round to kick it, or to drive it away. Walk on unmoved, the dog will not bite, and the friends who are influenced by the barking are best got rid of, and belong to that class which Carlyle pronounces "the sham respectability of the world, but the real and true blackguards." The "gigmanity" of society is more ludicrous than potential; great allowance should be made for the equivocal position of most of the prudes and censors of mankind. As weak wines make good vinegar, so do reformed wantons and quondam bankrupts become naturally the guardians of public morals, and the retailers of slander.

Mr. Cooper reaped the usual fruits of assaulting so many-headed a monster as the Press; and it is said by those who know him best, that few things have done so much to sour his temper as this crusade. Cervantes must have had a similar adventure in his mind when he made Don Quixote attack the windmills. It has always appeared to us a capital illustration of a battle with the Newspapers.

While, however, we deprecate the commission of so great a folly as a legal prosecution, we think we have a perfect right to turn round and criticise the critics; singular enough, they seem to consider this as a wonderful impertinence, and to resent it with additional bitterness.

We do not, however, intend here to enter into an elaborate essay upon the Despotism of the Press; we merely intend to offer a passing remark, as to the evil tendencies of the unli-

censed abuse now so prevalent with the writers of the public Journals.

We have heard Mr. Wordsworth maintain, that the only plan to preserve the author's mind and morals in a pure, healthy state, was to adopt the rule he had unflinchingly observed through life,—never to read any review of himself, either of praise or censure, whatever might be the temptation. He went on to prove, that in time we became callous to public opinion, and consequently one great guard on the virtue of mankind was lost; if we make a point of reading criticisms, we feel at first stung into indignation, vindictive feelings are naturally aroused, our own peace of mind is wounded, and we either become the sport of every fool or knave who writes for the journals of the day, or grow callous to public opinion. We refer to that part of our volume which treats of this subject, for a fuller exposition of the present vicious system of Journalism. The comic part of this enormous abuse is admirably exposed by Dickens in "Pickwick," in his history of the war between the rival editors of Eatanswill.

The chief defect in Mr. Cooper's novels is the want of humor; we mean this in its broad Shakspearian sense, admitting that there is a racy, quiet shrewdness in many of the remarks of Natty Bumppo, which supplies the place.

The character of that simple-minded hunter is certainly the greatest effort of its author; and the Leather-Stocking Romances will undoubtedly remain permanently a part of the national literature.

Like Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Cooper has written too much, and has published too fast. The world is very quickwitted, and

not slow to proclaim when an author grows tedious; although the unwitting scribe, like the archbishop in Gil Blas, takes it very unkindly should the dreadful fact be even hinted.

While admitting that the Leather-Stocking Romances are Mr. Cooper's greatest efforts, we must object *as critics* to the elaboration of his making one man the hero of five distinct works of fiction, although we feel sure we have negatived the criticism *as readers*. There is something to be sure in habit, which may perhaps make us like what at first was only endured; but our feeling for Nathaniel Bumppo becomes in time an affection. This must necessarily imply a power which belongs only to *genius;* for the reiteration of an idea or a presence by a common-place writer, inevitably leads to disgust. A very small reflection will convince us of this fact.

Another proof of the hazard an author runs in reviving the character of any former work, is found in the infrequency of its occurrence. Every writer has a certain instinct which unmistakably counsels, however vaguely, the true path; and we want no surer evidence of lack of genius—or in other words, the power to create that which appeals to the greater number of human minds—than the repeated failure of certain voluminous writers; the only exception to be made in this rule is with a few authors whose idiosyncrasy is superior to their genius, as in the case of Donne, Browning, and in a lesser degree of Carlyle and Emerson.

What mannerism is in style, idiosyncrasy is in thought; and betrays to the world a deficiency in that harmony of intellectual endowments which constitute true genius, just as regularity of feature is essential to a perfect face. This comparison admits of

a full development, and may make our idea clearer to the general reader than a technical analysis. We all know how frequently the most perfect classicality of feature exists without beauty: whereas in many irregular faces, there is as often found so charming an expression, that it is difficult to conceive any countenance more lovely. In like manner, an apparent union of many qualities may exist without producing the great poet or novelist; on the other hand, we sometimes observe a writer who wilfully avoids the true path, or else clouds over his course by a peculiarity artificially created. Now we think this applies in a considerable degree to Mr. Cooper, who has weakened his powers by narrowing his original impulses.

The works of a great mind should radiate from his inmost soul as from a centre whose circumference is lost in metaphysical truth, so lofty as to appear subtilized. In this case, the lowest intellect, as well as the highest, is carried to the full extent of its capacity of enjoyment or thought, and still the author is not exhausted. It is this which stamps Shakspeare as indisputably the first of Poets—the peasant and the philosopher are alike instructed and elevated. Every man, woman, and child, starts from one common point, viz. the heart. This is the centre of Shakspeare's nature; the extent of his kingdom is the Imagination. The inference is a logical deduction, that every reader of inferior mind, in proportion as he masters his author, becomes elevated into a superior nature. It is this peculiarity of the mind that always makes the student of *One Book* a dangerous antagonist: like the man who has devoted his attention to one weapon, he becomes invincible in that department. Imitation is so woven in all our natures, even in

that of the most original genius, that no man can devote much attention to a particular author without being modified by that preference. Browning's admiration of Alfieri and Donne has condensed his thoughts and cramped his style; Carlyle suffers also from his excessive partiality for Richter. Our readers must not think these remarks, however dull, altogether misplaced; they will enable him the more clearly to judge why the writings of Cooper, admirable as they are, are not more extensively popular with his countrymen. They are written more for an English audience than for an American. The Anglo-Saxons on the other side the Atlantic have a thousand years upon their brow, and they have become artificialized just to that extent, which renders the wild scenes of nature so vividly brought before them by Cooper, refreshing to the highest degree of pleasure; it is appealing to the instinct of contrast.

Gray beautifully illustrates this in one of his poetical fragments, when he says:

"So the wretch that long was tost
On the thorny bed of Pain,
At length regains his vigor lost,
He lives—he breathes again:
The humblest flow'ret of the vale:
The lowest note that swells the gale;
The common earth—the air—the skies,
To him are opening Paradise."

The true secret of delight lies in the antagonism of Human Nature. The artificial creates a love for the natural, its opposite; just as men love women—strength loves fragility—fragility

yearns for strength—the low adores the lofty; the idea of sublimity is a contrast! it requires humility to feel awe. Grandeur is the result of a physical or intellectual contradiction; equals can never admire equals—a sympathy is destruction to sublimity; these are not paradoxes, but facts; and facts based upon human observations. The smaller the man, the greater the mountain—and it arises from the egotism of our common nature; every man, however small or however great, makes himself the standard of excellence, and we affirm, in all reverence, that if we look deeply and unshrinkingly into our own souls, we shall be more and more convinced of the fact, that every man's idea of God is founded upon himself, magnified to the utmost extent of that particular man's arithmetical or intellectual vision. In proportion to the spectrum will be the figure thrown upon the canvas; in a manner, God is the spectre of the Brocken, depending upon various accidents of the elements. It was a favorite remark of Coleridge, that if any man would faithfully and clearly write down his definition of the Supreme Being, he would unhesitatingly give him his own character. He illustrated this position with many instances of men, whose religious opinions we well knew, and in every instance he presented us with a key to the man's whole character.

This undeviating coherency is forcibly exemplified in many authors, and especially in that of "the Spy."

Mark, too, how wonderfully the pride and restlessness of the man are shown in the creations of his fancy. The family likeness is too strong to admit of a doubt. As we have remarked before, this does not invariably ignore the existence of genius, it

merely throws it out of its universality: we use this word as in contrast to the term Idiosyncratic.

We have sometimes heard Cooper called a prose Wordsworth of the Woods: and in a certain sense it is true—for we recognise in three fourths of his stories that pervading impress of forest scenery which is his peculiar charm.

This, doubtless, is the reason why so many complain of the monotony of these writers. The success of Sir Walter Scott lies in his variety; here Cooper fails. This tendency to one tune is a mistake, so far as the public is concerned. To be popular, an author must be various; truly a difficult problem to solve, since there is no guide who can find the trail. This is one of those points in which experience is fatal as to detail, benefiting only by the broad bold fact, that it cannot invent an originality; like Poets, they must be born, not made.

In "the Pilot" we observe the nationality of the author in an undue predominance: indeed this remark applies to all he has published, where the two countries come into conflict.

The character of Long Tom Coffin, admirable as it is, seems more English than American; it is founded more on Dibdin's Songs than the transatlantic Sailor. This was turned to good account by some English Playwright when the novel first appeared; for he reversed the action, and making Tom Coffin an English Seaman, and Boroughcliffe an American Volunteer, coolly transferred the scene of action to the shores of the New World. With this slight alteration, the British public highly enjoyed the Drama.

We well remember one night when Cooke as Long Tom, and Reeve as Boroughcliffe, were convulsing the audience, that some

Americans gave vent to their indignation, and loudly protested against Reeve's outrageous caricature; after a few involuntary ebullitions their patriotism cooled, and they endured the rest with praiseworthy and smiling composure.

There are so many stirring scenes in this novel that it carries the reader through without much effort; but, after the excitement of the first perusal is over, we cannot help noticing the serious defects that stare us in the face. There is a needless obscurity in the character of Paul Jones, from whom the novel derives its name; it seems to us that any man conversant with the coasting trade would have done, and that a fine character has been brought to do porter's work. His skill in conducting the vessel out of its difficulties, and his knowledge of the shoals and the rocks, are certainly truly marvellous, reminding us somewhat of the Irish Pilot, who, boarding a ship in the mouth of a harbor, was asked by the Captain if he was sure he knew all the rocks?

"Oh! to be sure I do," said Paddy. "I know every rock about; that's a fact."

"You are the very man for me," exclaimed the delighted captain, and forthwith engaged him to pilot the ship to her moorings. Soon after, to his indignation and dismay, the vessel went bump upon a rock, and remained fast. He cried out in his wrath—

"Why, you lying villain, you said you knew every rock in the harbor!"

"To be sure I do," coolly replied the pilot, "and *this is one of them!*"

Paul Jones, the bold-brave Admiral, ought, we consider, not to have been introduced by the author, if he could find nothing

better for him to do than to conduct the ship out of soundings. Probably this artistic error arose from that same overweening national prejudice, which is so great a defect in Mr. Cooper's novels. Had he done justice to the capabilities and career of Paul Jones, he would of necessity have overshadowed the American actors, and consequently the hero would have been a Scotchman. A great author should never suffer the smaller to control the greater; and, in a work of art, truth should reign, and not prejudice. Pursuing this plan, History itself might be altered to suit national feeling. A certain patriotic leaning is perhaps unavoidable, and we can readily sympathize with its exhibition; but it should never distort, much less destroy the truth.

We shall not enter into the improbabilities of the plot, but endeavor to illustrate Mr. Cooper's genius by bringing before the reader the scene where the old sailor perishes suicidally in the vessel. It is so powerfully drawn—so vividly brought before us—that we do not stop to inquire how far it is correct in point of character. The great difference between a passion and a monomania lies in the pursuit of the object, and the overvaluing of it. In one sense every passion may be termed a monomania, but, though the line of demarcation varies in different individuals, it is, nevertheless, very plainly defined.

A monomania is a passion carried to an unnatural extent. Love is natural, but when this passion for an object carries us beyond reason it becomes a monomania. Judged by this rule, Long Tom Coffin is a monomaniac, for no rational being would destroy himself because a favorite ship was sinking. Still with even this serious drawback, the genius of a fine writer is visible throughout the following extract.

"Dillon and the cockswain were now the sole occupants of their dreadful station. The former stood, in a kind of stupid despair, a witness of the scene we have related; but as his curdled blood began again to flow more warmly through his heart, he crept close to the side of Tom, with that sort of selfish feeling that makes even hopeless misery more tolerable, when endured in participation with another.

"'When the tide falls,' he said in a voice that betrayed the agony of fear, though his words expressed the renewal of hope, 'we shall be able to walk to land.'

"'There was One, and only One, to whose feet the waters were the same as a dry deck,' returned the cockswain; 'and none but such as have his power will ever be able to walk from these rocks to the sands.' The old seaman paused, and turning his eyes, which exhibited a mingled expression of disgust and compassion, on his companion, he added, with reverence,—'Had you thought more of him in fair weather, your case would be less to be pitied in this tempest.'

"'Do you still think there is much danger?' asked Dillon.

"'To them that have reason to fear death. Listen! do you hear that hollow noise beneath ye?'

"''Tis the wind, driving by the vessel!'

"''Tis the poor thing herself,' said the affected cockswain, 'giving her last groans. The water is breaking up her decks, and in a few minutes more the handsomest model that ever cut a wave will be like the chips that fell from her timbers in framing!'

"'Why, then, did you remain here?' cried Dillon, wildly.

"'To die in my coffin, if it should be the will of God,' returned Tom. 'These waves, to me, are what the land is to you; I was born on them, and I have always meant that they should be my grave.'

"'But I—I,' shrieked Dillon, 'I am not ready to die!—I cannot die!—I will not die!'

"'Poor wretch!' muttered his companion; 'you must go, like the rest of us; when the death-watch is called, none can skulk from the muster.'

"'I can swim,' Dillon continued, rushing, with frantic eagerness, to the side of the wreck. 'Is there no billet of wood, no rope, that I can take with me?'

"'None; everything has been cut away or carried off by the sea. If ye are about to strive for your life, take with ye a stout heart and a clean conscience, and trust the rest to God!'

"'God!' echoed Dillon in the madness of his phrensy; 'I know no God! there is no God that knows me!'

"'Peace!' said the deep tones of the cockswain, in a voice that seemed to speak in the elements; 'blasphemer, peace!'

The heavy groaning, produced by the water in the timbers of the Ariel, at that moment added its impulse to the raging feelings of Dillon, and he cast himself headlong into the sea.

* * * * * * * * * *

"'Sheer to port, and clear the under-tow! sheer to the southward!'

Dillon heard the sounds, but his faculties were too much obscured by terror to distinguish their object; he, however, blindly yielded to the call, and gradually changed his direction, until his face was once more turned towards the vessel. The current swept him diagonally by the rocks, and he was forced into an eddy, where he had nothing to contend against but the waves, whose violence was much broken by the wreck. In this state he continued still to struggle, but with a force that was too much weakened to overcome the resistance he met. Tom looked around him for a rope, but all had gone over with the spars, or been swept away by the waves. At this moment of disappointment his eyes met those of

the desperate Dillon. Calm, and inured to horrors, as was the veteran seaman, he involuntarily passed his hand before his brow, to exclude the look of despair he encountered; and when, a moment afterwards, he removed the rigid member, he beheld the sinking form of the victim, as it gradually settled in the ocean, still struggling, with regular, but impotent strokes of the arms and feet, to gain the wreck, and to preserve an existence that had been so much abused in its hour of allotted probation.

"'He will soon know his God, and learn that his God knows him!' murmured the cockswain to himself. As he yet spoke, the wreck of the Ariel yielded to an overwhelming sea, and, after a universal shudder, her timbers and planks gave way, and were swept towards the cliffs, bearing the body of the simple-hearted cockswain among the ruins."

We have before alluded to "the Bravo," where this indomitable wilfulness has perilled the success of the work in question. There is a fine shadow thrown over the following scene, which reminds us of some of the effects produced by the Old Masters. Indeed, authors and painters are fellow artists; one works with words, the other with colors; one reaches nature through the eye, the other through the ear. The advantage, however, lies with the poet, as his descriptions rouse the eye to an activity as well as the other senses; for to a reader of the commonest imagination, we doubt if every vivid description does not bring palpably before his vision the scene related.

As a piece of this fine word painting we quote the following.

"The near approach of the strange gondola now attracted the whole attention of the old man. It came swiftly towards him,

impelled by six strong oars, and his eye turned feverishly in the direction of the fugitive. Jacopo, with a readiness that necessity and long practice rendered nearly instinctive, had taken a direction which blended his wake in a line with one of those bright streaks that the moon drew on the water, and which, by dazzling the eye, effectually concealed the objects within its width. When the fisherman saw that the Bravo had disappeared, he smiled and seemed at ease.

"'Aye, let them come here,' he said; 'it will give Jacopo more time. I doubt not the poor fellow hath struck a blow since quitting the palace that the council will not forgive! The sight of gold hath been too strong, and he hath offended those who have so long borne with him. God forgive me, that I have had communion with such a man! but when the heart is heavy, the pity of even a dog will warm our feelings. Few care for me now, or the friendship of such as he could never have been welcome.'

"Antonio ceased, for the gondola of the state came with a rushing noise to the side of his own boat, where it was suddenly stopped by a backward sweep of the oars. The water was still in ebullition, when a form passing into the gondola of the fisherman, the larger boat shot away again to the distance of a few hundred feet, and remained at rest.

"Antonio witnessed this movement in silent curiosity; but when he saw the gondoliers of the state lying on their oars, he glanced his eye again furtively in the direction of Jacopo, saw that all was safe, and faced his companion with confidence. The brightness of the moon enabled him to distinguish the dress and aspect of a bare-foot Carmelite. The latter seemed more confounded than his companion, by the rapidity of the movement, and the novelty of his situation. Notwithstanding his confusion, however, an evident look of wonder crossed his mortified features when he first beheld the humbled condition, the thin and whitened locks, and the gene-

ral air and bearing of the old man with whom he now found himself.

"'Who art thou?' escaped him, in the impulse of surprise.

"'Antonio of the Lagunes! A fisherman that owes much to St. Anthony, for favors little deserved.'

"'And why hath one like thee fallen beneath the senate's displeasure?'

"'I am honest and ready to do justice to others. If that offend the great, they are men more to be pitied than envied.'

"'The convicted are always more disposed to believe themselves unfortunate than guilty. The error is fatal, and it should be eradicated from the mind, lest it lead to death.'

"'Go tell this to the patricians. They have need of plain counsel, and a warning from the church.'

"'My son, there is a pride and anger, and perverse heart in thy replies.'

* * * * * * * * * *

"'Father,' he said, when a long and earnest look was ended, 'there can be little harm in speaking truth to one of thy holy office. They have told thee there was a criminal here in the Lagunes, who hath provoked the anger of St. Mark?'

* * * * * * * * * *

"'Thou speakest of another!—thou art not then the criminal they seek?'

"'I am a sinner, like all born of woman, reverend Carmelite, but my hand hath never held any other weapon than the good sword with which I struck the infidel. There was one lately here, that I grieve to add, cannot say this!'

"'And he is gone?'

* * * * * * * * * *

"The Carmelite, who had arisen, instantly reseated himself, like one actuated by a strong impulse.

"'I thought he had already been far beyond pursuit,' he muttered, unconsciously apologizing for his apparent haste.

"'He is over bold, and I fear he will row back to the canals, in which case you might meet nearer to the city—or there may be more gondolas of the state out—in short, father, thou wilt be more certain to escape hearing the confession of a Bravo, by listening to that of a fisherman, who has long wanted an occasion to acknowledge his sins.'

"Men who ardently wish the same result, require few words to understand each other. The Carmelite took, intuitively, the meaning of his companion, and throwing back his cowl, a movement that exposed the countenance of Father Anselmo, he prepared to listen to the confession of the old man.

"'Thou art a Christian, and one of thy years hath not to learn the state of mind that becometh a penitent,' said the monk, when each was ready.

"'I am a sinner, father; give me counsel and absolution, that I may have hope.'

"'Thy will be done—thy prayer is heard—approach and kneel.'

"Antonio, who had fastened his line to his seat, and disposed of his net with habitual care, now crossed himself devoutly, and took his station before the Carmelite. His acknowledgments of error then began. Much mental misery clothed the language and ideas of the fisherman with a dignity that his auditor had not been accustomed to find in men of his class. A spirit so long chastened by suffering had become elevated and noble. He related his hopes for the boy, the manner in which they had been blasted by the unjust and selfish policy of the state, his different efforts to procure the release of his grandson, and his bold expedients at the regatta, and the fancied nuptials with the Adriatic. When he had thus prepared the Carmelite to understand the origin of his sinful passions, which it was now his duty to expose, he spoke of those

passions themselves, and of their influence on a mind that was ordinarily at peace with mankind. The tale was told simply and without reserve, but in a manner to inspire respect, and to awaken powerful sympathy in him who heard it.

"'And these feelings thou didst indulge against the honored and powerful of Venice!' demanded the monk, affecting a severity he could not feel.

"'Before my God do I confess the sin! In bitterness of heart I cursed them; for to me they seemed men without feeling for the poor, and heartless as the marble of their own palaces.'

"'Thou knowest that to be forgiven thou must forgive. Dost thou, at peace with all of earth, forget this wrong, and canst thou, in charity with thy fellows, pray to Him who died for the race, in behalf of those who have injured thee?'

"Antonio bowed his head on his naked breast, and he seemed to commune with his soul.

"'Father,' he said, in a rebuked tone, 'I hope I do.'

"'Thou must not trifle with thyself to thine own perdition. There is an eye in yon vault above us which pervades space, and which looks into the inmost secrets of the heart. Canst thou pardon the error of the patricians, in a contrite spirit for thine own sins?'

"'Holy Maria, pray for them, as I now ask mercy in their behalf! Father, they are forgiven.'

"'Amen!'

"The Carmelite arose and stood over the kneeling Antonio, with the whole of his benevolent countenance illuminated by the moon. Stretching his arms towards the stars, he pronounced the absolution in a voice that was touched with pious fervor. The upward expectant eye, with the withered lineaments of the fisherman, and the holy calm of the monk, formed a picture of resignation and hope that angels would have loved to witness.

"'Amen! amen!' exclaimed Antonio, as he arose, crossing himself. 'St. Anthony and the Virgin aid me to keep these resolutions!'

"'I will not forget thee, my son, in the offices of holy church. Receive my benediction, that I may depart.'

"Antonio again bowed his knee, while the Carmelite firmly pronounced the words of peace. When this last office was performed, and a decent interval of mutual but silent prayer had passed, a signal was given to summon the gondola of the state. It came rowing down with great force, and was instantly at their side. Two men passed into the boat of Antonio, and with officious zeal assisted the monk to resume his place in that of the republic.

"'Is the penitent shrived?' half whispered one, seemingly the superior of the two.

"'Here is an error. He thou seek'st has escaped. This aged man is a fisherman named Antonio, and one who cannot have gravely offended St. Mark. The Bravo hath passed towards the island of San Giorgio, and must be sought elsewhere.'

"The officer released the person of the monk, who passed quickly beneath the canopy, and he turned to cast a hasty glance at the features of the fisherman. The rubbing of a rope was audible, and the anchor of Antonio was lifted by a sudden jerk. A heavy plashing of the water followed, and the two boats shot away together, obedient to a violent effort of the crew. The gondola of the state exhibited its usual number of gondoliers bending to their toil, with its dark and hearse-like canopy, but that of the fisherman was empty.

"The sweep of the oars and the plunge of the body of Antonio had been blended in a common wash of the surge. When the fisherman came to the surface, after his fall, he was alone in the centre of the vast but tranquil sheet of water. There might have been a glimmering of hope, as he rose from the darkness of the

sea to the bright beauty of that moon-lit night. But the sleeping domes were too far for human strength, and the gondolas were sweeping madly towards the town. He turned, and swimming feebly, for hunger and previous exertion had undermined his strength, he bent his eye on the dark spot which he had constantly recognised as the boat of the Bravo.

"Jacopo had not ceased to watch the interview with the utmost intentness of his faculties. Favored by position, he could see without being distinctly visible. He saw the Carmelite pronouncing the absolution, and he witnessed the approach of the larger boat. He heard a plunge heavier than that of falling oars, and he saw the gondola of Antonio towing away empty. The crew of the republic had scarcely swept the Lagunes with their oar-blades, before his own stirred the water.

"'Jacopo!—Jacopo!' came fearfully and faintly to his ears.

"The voice was known, and the occasion thoroughly understood. The cry of distress was succeeded by the rush of the water, as it piled before the beak of the Bravo's gondola. The sound of the parted element was like the sighing of a breeze. Ripples and bubbles were left behind, as the driven scud floats past the stars, and all those muscles which had once before that day been so finely developed in the race of the gondoliers, were now expanded, seemingly in twofold volumes. Energy and skill were in every stroke, and the dark spot came down the streak of light, like the swallow touching the water with its wing.

"'Hither, Jacopo—thou steerest wide!'

"The beak of the gondola turned, and the glaring eye of the Bravo caught a glimpse of the fisherman's head.

"'Quickly, good Jacopo,—I fail!'

"The murmuring of the water again drowned the stifled words. The efforts of the oar were phrensied, and at each stroke the light gondola appeared to rise from its element.

"'Jacopo—hither—dear Jacopo!'

"'The mother of God aid thee, fisherman!—I come.'

"'Jacopo—the boy!—the boy!'

"The water gurgled; an arm was visible in the air, and it disappeared. The gondola drove upon the spot where the limb had just been visible, and a backward stroke, that caused the ashen blade to bend like a reed, laid the trembling boat motionless. The furious action threw the Lagune into ebullition, but, when the foam subsided, it lay calm as the blue and peaceful vault it reflected.

"'Antonio!' burst from the lips of the Bravo.

"A frightful silence succeeded the call. There was neither answer nor human form. Jacopo compressed the handle of his oar with fingers of iron, and his own breathing caused him to start. On every side he bent a phrensied eye, and on every side he beheld the profound repose of that treacherous element which is so terrible in its wrath. Like the human heart, it seemed to sympathize with the tranquil beauty of the midnight view; but, like the human heart, it kept its own fearful secrets."

This passage is so fine that we must overlook its length: it is necessary to enable us to judge how perfectly Mr. Cooper succeeds in detached parts. The style of this passage is also unexceptionable, and the slight obscurity in the narrative throws a gloom over the scene which serves as the chiar'-oscuro of the picture.

It is evident from this novel, unsuccessful as it was, that the writer had faculties for writing romances of a more general character than the world at large gave him credit for, and that it only required perseverance to be as successful in this walk of fiction as in the other. If preference for American subjects

determined Mr. Cooper to abandon this path and return to the other, he should not complain of his want of general popularity, but remain content with his fame, which is sufficiently European to satisfy even an ambitious man.

Forest scenery has ever been a favorite with all classes of readers: our boyish associations cling to us till we become the lean and slippered pantaloon. This will account for the delight we receive from those pages of the novelist which dwell on woods, old castles, and the pleasantest side of romantic life. If we all had the courage to speak aloud our thoughts, or our ideal occupations, we should find the world was a mass of madmen; that is, according to the present test. The maniac is one who speaks and acts, as all of us think and feel. What criminals should we stand forth if our intentions or wishes were realized? This may appear a hard thing to say of human nature, but it is the truth; and those who reflect the most, and probe their own natures deepest, know this too well sometimes for their peace of mind. Should this view be objected to, let it be borne in mind that it is insisted upon repeatedly in the Holy Scriptures. So with regard to our waking dreams: what a romance of madness, love, hatred, and vanity, is the unspoken life of every man:—unacted certainly in deed, but thoroughly acted in thought; visible not to men, but palpably known to ourselves and God! Ah! even here strongly suspected by the shrewdest of our fellow-creatures; but there is no direct evidence to convict us before the world.

Is there one of those whose eyes may rest on these pages who cannot bear testimony to the truth of this sketch? It is

to this early dream of forest wanderings that in after life we derive pleasure from works of fiction, and more especially from those parts which remind us more strongly of our chivalric longings. Who has not in many a tented field battled for his country? Where is the man who has not released his lady-love from haunted castle? Ah! even the fat old man who opens oysters at Florence's has had his vision of love and beauty; and, dear reader, where is the absurdity of his having had these delusions, any more than yourself? Leigh Hunt has often said, that every man had a strong suspicion he was eminently ridiculous on certain occasions, and yet this very man was to himself his own hero: thus confirming the saying, that no one was a hero in the eyes of his valet, but always in his own.

The horror of an event is often formed in the mind by the absurdity of the same under somewhat different aspect. We will trespass again on Leigh Hunt for an illustration. He told us that notwithstanding all he had read and all he had written on the horrors of war, he had never his mind filled with the perfect idea of its gigantic lawlessness, till on the occasion of a review, or sham fight, during the Napoleontic war.

The King had reviewed the Volunteers on Wimbledon Common one intensely sultry day, and as part of the regiment to which the lively author of "Rimini" belonged was marching home, they entered some little village near the scene of this mimic slaughter. They had neither eaten nor drunk since morning, and the corporeal part of their natures was becoming vociferous for sustenance. On a sudden they beheld a baker carrying a large basket of newly-baked loaves; *veni*, *vidi*, *vici*,

was the order of the day; swift as thought the hapless baker was overthrown, his basket vanished from him, and ere the bewildered knight of the oven could look around him the contents had already been introduced to the gastric juice, and were undergoing its digestive process. Leigh Hunt paused to survey the scene, and said, "Good Heaven! if in a peaceful country like this so little regard is paid to the laws of property, what on earth must be the result when a brutal and maddened soldiery is let loose upon a defenceless town?"

While we are on this subject, the mention of Leigh Hunt's name reminds us of a singular anecdote he told us one day. It is well known that as editor of the Examiner he incited and encouraged Sir Francis Burdett to defy the House of Commons to imprison him. It is not so well known that the self-said editor of the Examiner (in his capacity of volunteer soldier) helped a few days afterwards to take him to the Tower of London for following his advice.

We remember one of the party took him to task for this apparent contradiction, if not treachery; but he defended himself on the ground that he was right in his capacity of public journalist to spirit him up to assist the liberty of the subject, and that it was no less his duty on the other hand as a soldier to obey the orders of his superior officer.

After this digression we shall enter one of Mr. Cooper's forests and refresh our readers' attention.

We must premise that this is by no means one of his best "bits of painting;" still it has all the characteristics of his style, and we present it, being the first that comes to hand.

"The river was confined between high and cragged rocks, one of which impended above the spot where the canoe rested. As these, again, were surmounted by tall trees, which appeared to totter on the brows of the precipice, it gave the stream the appearance of running through a deep and narrow dell. All beneath the fantastic limbs and ragged tree-tops, which were, here and there, dimly painted against the starry zenith, lay alike in shadowed obscurity. Behind them, the curvature of the banks soon bounded the view, by the same dark and wooded outline; but in front, and apparently at no great distance, the water seemed piled against the heavens whence it tumbled into caverns, out of which issued those sullen sounds that had loaded the evening atmosphere. It seemed, in truth, to be a spot devoted to seclusion, and the sisters imbibed a soothing impression of increased security, as they gazed upon its romantic, though not unappalling beauties. A general movement among their conductors, however, soon recalled them from a contemplation of the wild charms that night had assisted to lend the place, to a painful sense of their real peril.

"The horses had been secured to some scattering shrubs that grew in the fissures of the rocks, where, standing in the water, they were left to pass the night. The scout directed Heyward and his disconsolate fellow travellers to seat themselves in the forward end of the canoe, and took possession of the other himself, as erect and steady as if he floated in a vessel of much firmer materials. The Indians warily retraced their steps towards the place they had left, when the scout, placing his pole against a rock, by a powerful shove, sent his frail bark directly into the centre of the turbulent stream. For many minutes the struggle between the light bubble in which they floated, and the swift current, was severe and doubtful. Forbidden to stir even a hand, and almost afraid to breathe, lest they should expose the frail fabric to the fury of the stream,

the anxious passengers watched the glancing waters in feverish suspense. Twenty times they thought the whirling eddies were sweeping them to destruction, when the master-hand of their pilot would bring the bows of the canoe to stem the rapid, and their eyes glanced over a confused mass of the murmuring element—so swift was the passage between it and their little vessel. A long, a vigorous, and, as it appeared to the females, a desperate effort, closed the scene. Just as Alice veiled her eyes in horror, under the impression that they were about to be swept within the vortex at the foot of the cataract, the canoe floated, stationary, at the side of a flat rock, that lay on a level with the water."

In the Leather-Stocking Tales we have the complete life of Natty Bumppo more elaborately described than perhaps any other hero of romance; in short, a sort of Sir Charles Grandison of the woods. We cannot help giving to this novel the fullest measure of praise; notwithstanding that the life extends through fifteen volumes, we read the dying scene of the hero with regret.

We seem to be really losing a companion with whom we have had many journeyings—with whom we have had hair-breadth adventures—whose fidelity, coolness, sagacity, and undaunted courage, have helped us at the very last need—and with whom we have sat 'neath the forest's edge, or in the heart of the wood, chatting and discussing many a pleasant meal after some breathless escape! The consistency of his character is so admirably preserved that we almost feel his existence to be a personal fact, the demonstration of which would be absurd.

Much has been said by critics of the similarity between

a novel and a comedy, and a romance and a tragedy. We think, however, the difference very wide; being no less than between action and narration. The dramatist includes the novelist and the romancist. The latter may eke out his shortcomings by description, as a man in an equivocal position may explain the ambiguity away, and stultify to a certain extent the evidence of the spectator's senses. But in a dramatist all must be plain and palpable; there is no interpreter save the spectator, and he is incapable of being corrupted by any partisanship beyond his own feelings. It is this which renders a dramatist so rare a production in all ages, more especially our own, while novelists are as plentiful as oysters.

The whole mystery lies in a nutshell. There are tendencies in the human heart which require a certain pabulum to satisfy, and it shows a considerable knowledge of our common nature to select that particular one. A very popular author must necessarily be a man of great sagacity. A keen instinct is indispensable for a great dramatist, although mere playwrights may be made out of a clever selecter of theatrical situations. It not unfrequently occurs that a good acting play is far from a natural representation, and sometimes it may be diametrically opposed to nature. Whenever a dramatic action is startling the poet has failed in his legitimate result. A true dramatist works to a point; and although every scene should have a certain unexpectedness in it, so as to keep the interest alive and create an appetite for the denouement, yet the climax should be artistically reached by the natural process of human passion, and not vaulted into at a bound, like a mountebank's trick.

We have made this passing allusion to action, as represented or narrated, in order to remark that Mr. Cooper is not a dramatic writer, even in the narrative; and, as a proof, we may adduce that while most of Scott's stories have been dramatized, we are not aware of any of the American's being presented in that shape to the public except the Pilot.

We feel a strong conviction that a great success might be attained by a writer who combined dramatic action with romantic description: so that the mind would be filled with the idea, and the heart with the feeling.

We are anxious to avoid much quotation, but a certain portion is indispensable to justify ourselves to the public. Many of our opinions will, no doubt, be considered as either those of the partisan or the foe. We wish to avoid all onesidedness, and to carry the greatest truth-speakingness into effect. No man of genius need fear criticism, however boldly uttered; it is the charlatan alone who fears the truth. Ithuriel's spear is fatal only to the loathsome toad. To return, however, to our quotation. That Mr. Cooper can write simple and touching English is too well known to need proof. We give the following, therefore, merely as a picture of quiet pathos, producing its effects by the subdued tone of the narrative. This death scene is admirably in keeping with the whole life of Natty Bumppo.

"'And such a stone you would have at your grave?'

"'I! no, no, I have no son but Hard-Heart, and it is little that an Indian knows of White fashions and usages. Besides, I am his debtor already, seeing it is so little I have done since I have lived

in his tribe. The rifle might bring the value of such a thing—but then I know it will give the boy pleasure to hang the piece in his hall, for many is the deer and the bird that he has seen it destroy. No, no, the gun must be sent to him whose name is graven on the lock!'

"'But there is one who would gladly prove his affection in the way you wish; he, who owes you not only his deliverance from so many dangers, but who inherits a heavy debt of gratitude from his ancestors. The stone shall be put at the head of your grave.'

"The old man extended his emaciated hand, and gave the other a squeeze of thanks.

"'I thought you might be willing to do it, but I was backward in asking the favor,' he said, 'seeing that you are not of my kin. Put no boastful words on the same, but just the name, the age, and the time of the death, with something from the holy book; no more, no more. My name will then not be altogether lost on 'arth; I need no more.'

"Middleton intimated his assent, and then followed a pause, that was only broken by distant and broken sentences from the dying man. He appeared now to have closed his account with the world, and to await merely for the final summons to quit it. Middleton and Hard-Heart placed themselves on the opposite sides of his seat, and watched with melancholy solicitude the variations of his countenance. For two hours there was no very sensible alteration. The expression of his faded and time-worn features was that of a calm and dignified repose. From time to time he spoke, uttering some brief sentence in the way of advice, or asking some simple questions concerning those in whose fortunes he still took a friendly interest. During the whole of that solemn and anxious period each individual of the tribe kept his place in the most self-restrained patience. When the old man spoke, all bent their heads to listen;

and when his words were uttered, they seemed to ponder on their wisdom and usefulness.

"As the flame drew nigher to the socket, his voice was hushed, and there were moments when his attendants doubted whether he still belonged to the living. Middleton, who watched each wavering expression of his weather-beaten visage with the interest of a keen observer of human nature, softened by the tenderness of personal regard, fancied he could read the workings of the old man's soul in the strong lineaments of his countenance. Perhaps what the enlightened soldier took for the delusion of mistaken opinion did actually occur, for who has returned from that unknown world to explain by what forms and in what manner he was introduced into its awful precincts! Without pretending to explain what must ever be a mystery to the quick, we shall simply relate facts as they occurred.

"The trapper had remained nearly motionless for an hour. His eyes, alone, had occasionally opened and shut. When opened, his gaze seemed fastened on the clouds which hung around the western horizon, reflecting the bright colors, and giving form and loveliness to the glorious tints of an American sunset. The hour—the calm beauty of the season—the occasion, all conspired to fill the spectators with solemn awe. Suddenly, while musing on the remarkable position in which he was placed, Middleton felt the hand which he held grasp his own with incredible power, and the old man, supported on either side by his friends, rose upright to his feet. For a single moment he looked about him, as if to invite all in his presence to listen (the lingering remnant of human frailty), and then, with a fine military elevation of his head, and with a voice that might be heard in every part of that numerous assembly, he pronounced the emphatic word—'Here!'

"A movement so entirely unexpected, and the air of grandeur

and humility which were so remarkably united in the mien of the trapper, together with the clear and uncommon force of his utterance, produced a short period of confusion in the faculties of all present. When Middleton and Hard-Heart, who had each involuntarily extended a hand to support the form of the old man, turned to him again, they found that the subject of their interest was removed for ever beyond the necessity of their care. They mournfully placed the body in its seat, and Le Balafré arose to announce the termination of the scene to the tribe. The voice of the old Indian seemed a sort of echo from that invisible world to which the meek spirit of the trapper had just departed.

"'A valiant, a just, and a wise warrior has gone on the path which will lead him to the blessed grounds of his people!' he said. 'When the voice of the Wahcondah called him, he was ready to answer. Go, my children; remember the just chief of the Pale-faces, and clear your own tracks from briers!'

"The grave was made beneath the shade of some noble oaks. It has been carefully watched to the present hour by the Pawnees of the Loup, and is often shown to the traveller and the trader as a spot where a just White man sleeps. In due time the stone was placed at its head, with the simple inscription which the trapper had himself requested. The only liberty taken by Middleton was to add, '*May no wanton hand ever disturb his remains!*'"

The result of a long and attentive consideration of Mr. Cooper's works is, that he is without doubt a man of a shrewd and vigorous intellect, self-willed and opinionated, quick and vindictive in his feelings, but with a kind and generous heart; somewhat too fond, perhaps, of brooding over wrongs which, after all, may be only imaginary, and requiring more deference from the world than it is apt to pay to a Living Author.

But, with regard to the character of his productions, he is deficient in imagination and fancy, and humor.

Invention he certainly possesses, but it is not of the highest kind; his powers of observation are strong, but not universal, and this gives an air of monotony to many of his works.

He also takes an undue advantage of certain opportunities to give lectures, and hence the didactic tone of many dialogues interspersed in the novels. This is a serious defect, in an artistic view; a novelist should instruct by implication, and argue by insinuation. When he becomes didactic he ceases to be romantic, and the effect is neutralized.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

EMERSON is certainly one of the most original writers the New World has produced. He writes least like an American of any author we have read. We do not mean this disparagingly to his character as a good and true republican, but to show our opinion of his greater breadth and depth of appreciation than is generally met with in American authors.

Mr. Emerson's fame is a curious compound of poet, metaphysician, lecturer, economist, and critic; and in each we think him first-rate.

We shall give his poetry the preference in considering him critically, and at once commence by complaining of his peculiar metre and occasional obscurity. Mr. Browning has often maintained that the poet has a perfect and unchallengeable right to place the thought in any shape he pleases; and that it is at the option of the public to read or not, just as it pleases; but that it has no right to criticise, seeing that it involves the apparent absurdity of the disciple teaching the master.

With all respect for the dictum of the author of "Sordello,"

we shall venture to give our opinion on the poet and philosopher, and with as great a belief in our own infallibility as though we were the Pope, or even the editor of a Sunday newspaper.

Passing over the peculiarity of Mr. Emerson's phraseology, we cannot avoid remarking what an old friend of Mr. Carlyle once said on reading some American writer's poetry, "that he would have sworn they were Mr. Carlyle's verses." We have often heard this remarked, but we never could see the justice of classing Mr. Emerson as a follower of Mr. Carlyle. We admit readily that as both write in English, and as both are great admirers of the German writers, more especially of Richter, a certain tinge of that wonderful man's style of thought and diction is naturally preserved; but it is more of matter than manner, and partakes more of admiration and appreciation than of imitation.

There is a singular force and meaning in most of Emerson's emanations, whether in prose or verse; and if they demand a little more attention on the reader's part than the generality of poetry, it arises from the superiority of the author, and not from his obscurity. It is absurd to expect an author to express himself in the old style, and in the stale formulæ of the past. Fresh and deep thinkers invent a form of conveying the thought as well as the thought itself. Like Minerva, it springs clothed from the head of Jove: garb and form are simultaneous.

In the "Ode to Beauty" Emerson presses much meaning into small compass. How unlike the common-place love verses of the many are the following! It is truly refreshing

to get hold of a strong thinker, however rugged may be his revelations.

"Who gave thee, O Beauty,
The keys of this breast?
Too credulous lover,
Of blest and unblest."

Simplicity is here carried to its severity, and yet the poet breaks through, in the metaphorical language of passion, "the keys of this breast."

How directly the metaphysician goes into the heart of the subject!

"Say, when in lapsed ages
Thee knew I of old?
Or what was the service
For which I was sold?
When first my eyes saw thee,
I found me thy thrall,
By magical drawing
Sweet Tyrant of all!
I drank at thy fountain
False waters of thirst,
Thou intimate stranger,
Thou latest and first!"

The origin of the love of beauty, or how beauty acts upon the human heart, is truly a mystery, so deeply set in the mystery of our being, as to baffle poet as well as mere metaphysician; but as the fine old poet of Rydal says, many

revelations come on us in snatches and glimpses when we least expect them, and so with these short questionings we may even gain somewhat of the answer.

"Thy dangerous glances
Made women of men;
New-born we are melting
Into nature again."

The rich carelessness of Emerson's muse is well developed in these lines:

"Lavish, lavish Promiser,
Nigh persuading gods to err:
Guest of million painted forms
Which in turn thy glory warms:
The frailest leaf, the mossy bark,
The acorn's cup, the rain-drop's arc,
The swinging spider's silver line,
The ruby of the drop of wine,
The shining pebble of the pond,
Thou inscribest with a bond
In thy momentary play
Would bankrupt nature to repay."

A mere versifier would have made those images into a hundred lines; the true poet condenses; the elegant writer diffuses, till it becomes an atmosphere rather than a world.

The conclusion of this beautiful string of suggestive questionings and half-answered doubts is very fine.

"All that's good and great with thee
Works in close conspiracy;
Thou hast bribed the dark and lonely
To report thy features only,
And the cold and purple morning,
Itself with thoughts of thee adorning:
The leafy dell, the city mart,
Equal trophies of thy art:
E'en the flowing azure air
Thou hast touched for my despair.
And if I languish into dreams,
Again I meet thy ardent beams,
Queen of things. I dare not die
In Being's deep, past ear and eye,
Lest thee I find the same deceiver,
And be the sport of fate for ever.
Dread Power, but dear! if God thou be,
Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me."

There is nothing puling in these verses. A thorough mastery of the meaning contained in them is as good a lesson of mental logic as we need desire, and sharpens the intellect, as well as delights the poetical taste.

Mr. Emerson has, in some bold, clear lines, summed up his definition of true poetry.

"TO MERLIN.

"Thy trivial harp will never please,
Or fill my craving ear:
Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,

Free, peremptory, and clear.
No jingling serenader's art,
Nor treble of piano strings,
Can make the wild blood start
In its mystic springs!
The kingly bard
Must strike the chords rudely and hard,
As with hammer, or with mace,
That they may render back.
Chide me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought.
There was never mystery,
But 'tis figured in the flowers;
Was never secret history,
But birds told it in the bowers.
The harvest from the field,
Homeward brought the oxen strong;
A second crop thine acres yield,
Which I gather in a song."

We are quite aware how seldom casual readers pause long enough over poetry to find out all its meaning; but the meaning and the power are there, and the reader, not the poet, is deficient.

Mr. Emerson's power has not its foundation in the human heart: the roots of his being are in the intellect. Consequently he is deficient in one of the two great elements of genius. That this narrows his scope is too evident to need anything beyond the mere statement.

We will give a remarkable instance of this want of power to rouse the feelings. It is some verses he has written on the death of a little child. Surely, few things are so susceptible of pathos as this; but mark how hard, dry, and metaphysical the poet is.

"ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

"Returned this day, the south wind searches,
And finds young pines and budding birches,
But finds not the budding man;
Nature who lost him, cannot remake him,
Fate let him fall, fate can't retake him;
Nature, fate, men, him seek in vain."

An American critic well observes on this, "that the voice of lamentation is lost in a vague speculation on fate, interesting only to the intellect." It is difficult to find a subject more capable of touching regrets than the death of a child, and still more difficult to find a poet who has so completely failed in awaking one tender memory.

We shall take advantage of this circumstance to contrast several poets under the same inspiration, and mark how different are all their moods. Nevertheless, all except Emerson have the chief weight on the human heart.

Wordsworth, in his lament for a daughter "Dead and gone," puts the regrets of memory into an old man's mouth. Although years have passed since the blow fell, how fresh the wound still remains!

"Our work, said I, was well begun,
Then from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought.

"A second time did Matthew stop,
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain top,
To me he made reply:

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind,
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"With rod and line I 'sued the sport,
Which that sweet season gave,
And coming to the church, stopped short,
Beside my daughter's grave.

"Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale,
And then she sang—she would have been
A very nightingale.

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay,
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before."

And in another poem, how truly he touches the tenderest portion of the heart, when he says:

"If there is one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth."

We turn from this strain of pure musical pathos,

"Bringing the tears to the dim eyes,"

to another fine burst of natural sorrow; more sorrowful, inasmuch as Byron mixed up less natural objects than Wordsworth in his laments.

"There have been tears, and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive,
With fruits and fertile promise, and the spring
Came forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turned from all she brought, to all she could not bring."

An English poet has touched upon the same subject; as another illustration of the subject we quote it. We cannot here avoid remarking, that a very interesting volume might be made of selections from the works of the most eminent poets containing the expression of parallel feelings.

"ON A WITHERED FLOWER.

"Oh, wondrous power of thought,
This faded flower has brought,

Full on my mind one pleasant day in spring.
Once more the wind's sweet breath
Wakes from its silent death,
And that long-perished bird once more I hear it sing.

"I feel a bright form stand,
One of the seraph band,
Close at my side as in the times gone by.
Once more his little feet
With my long steps compete,
I walk along, nor turn aside mine eye.

"And now a mist of light
Grows stronger in my sight,
Shaping itself into a form most dear.
Features I deemed had gone
Once more I gaze upon,
My child—my buried child—I know that you are here."

In subjects partaking of a more artificial nature our poet is more at home, and there we can award him high praise. There is a spirit in the following worthy Herrick, we had almost said Anacreon.

"THE HUMBLE BEE.

"Burly, dozing, humble bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats thro' seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid zone!

Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines:
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

"Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion;
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer thro' the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon,
Epicurean of June:
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum,
All without is martyrdom.
When the south wind in May days,
With a net of shining haze,
Silvers the horizon wall,
And with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With the color of romance,
And infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.
Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone,
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers,
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found:

Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and hid-like pleasure.

"Aught unsavory, or unclean,
Hath my insect never seen:
But violets, and bilberry bells,
Maple sap, and daffodils,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine, with horn of honey,
Scented fern and agrimony,
Clover, catch-fly, adder's tongue,
And brier-roses dwelt among:
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

"Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher,
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat;
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous."

This quotation, somewhat too long for our plan, we really had not the heart to shorten. It is a fine collection of images, admirably strung together, appealing too much certainly to

the fancy; but, nevertheless, this will always be considered a gem of delightful composition.

We must now turn from Mr. Emerson's poetry to his prose, if we may use such a word, for the peculiarity of his mind is almost always to be poetical. Many of his critics contend that his finest thoughts are in his essays, and that the tone of his mind is essentially rhapsodical. If we concede this, we must bargain for our definition of a rhapsody. Many persons class Pindar's odes in that category, but Coleridge and others have declared that they only appear so to feeble and illogical minds. It is granted that the links of connexion from thought to thonght are at longer intervals, just as giants take greater strides than dwarfs, but the sequence is as regular as the pace of a tortoise. It is very usual to hear common-place men accuse loftier intellects of being flighty and disconnected; but it would be as absurd for the snail to charge the race-horse with irregularity in its steps, because its bounds are too wide for its microscropic vision. The connecting relations are also so subtle, in many arguments, that the gross-sighted mass of readers cannot see them; and, under the blinding influence of their defective vision, they deny the existence of the chain.

We remember Coleridge once illustrated this very happily by the first Olympiad, and established the point to the satisfaction of several distinguished critics.

When another accuses a man of being unintelligible, it generally only means that he does not understand him. So far from being a reproach to the poet, it is a confession of ignorance on the part of the critic. Were it not so,

the mysteries of the Trinity might be turned against itself; the secret of existence would be considered as conclusive evidence against vitality, and all the spiritual creation ignored at a blow.

Judging Emerson by this standard, we feel bound to say that we consider him a consistent and logical writer. That his style is somewhat involved we readily admit, but there is a force and condensation about it that fixes it on the mind. To be sure, we cannot run and read it as we run, but it was not intended for a novel or a book of gossip. It is a serious attempt to pass his knowledge into the masses; to give to the million who do not and will not think, the result of labors of the one who does. We must not look for flippancy of style, any more than frivolity of thought. Philosophy is a solemnity, not a jest; and Emerson has very little of Rabelais or Democritus in his composition.

Mr. Emerson's first speech to the public was a small volume called "Nature," which he, in setting out, defines as, "*All which philosophy distinguishes as the* 'NOT ME;' that is, *both nature and art, all other men, and my own body.*" He defines a lover of nature as one "*whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other, who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood.*"

The following description of his own feelings in the presence of Nature is very characteristic.

"*In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence*

of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration; almost I fear to think how glad I am."

As a companion to this moral of self-revelation, we give:—

"*Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it; then there is* a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend: the sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population."

The last line is a specimen of Emerson's prose "*concetti*" (to use the Italian word, instead of the English word *conceit*), which has a conventional sound we do not like to apply to so true a man as our author. We doubt if any human being under the affliction predicated ever had his feelings modified by that thought. The root of grief is in the heart, and not in the mind. We use the mind as distinct from *intellect*, which we consider as the union of brain and heart, thought and feeling. It was in this manner that Coleridge always insisted upon the incorporation of goodness into greatness: he never would allow any man to be great without he was good; he might have mind, but not intellect. These terms have been so often confounded that they are often mistaken as synonymous; but we have a great faith in the economy of nature. Not even a word is wasted, and the fact of two words shows they are different things. No two men out of the whole human race have ever been precisely alike, however much they might have resembled each other; there are shades of difference which rendered them as distinct as Hercules and Hecuba. And in like manner, no two words

mean precisely the same thing: a perfect synonym is an impossibility, and therefore, as a facetious philosopher once said, "very *rarely* comes to pass"—

> "For what's impossible can never be,
> And therefore very *rarely* comes to pass."

But it is needless to argue the point: every human being has had the affliction of losing some one dear to him; we therefore appeal to that unerring test for a confirmation of our opinion.

We must not, however, stop to criticise Mr. Emerson's peculiarities of thought and expression in detail, otherwise we should weary our readers; we shall, therefore, only allude to them once for all and say, that it forms to many the chief charm, and to others the great stumbling-block of their admiration and study.

Let us take another thought from his first volume:—

"The misery of man appears like children's petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens. What angels invented these splendid ornaments, these rich conveniences, this ocean of air above, this ocean of water beneath, this firmament of earth between? This zodiac of lights—this tent of dropping clouds—this striped coat of climates—this fourfold year of beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn, serve him: the field is at once his floor—his work-yard—his playground—his garden—and his bed."

We know of few books more full of suggestions than

Mr. Emerson's, and we could desire no pleasanter occupation than compiling a volume of these suggestive hints. We feel quite sure it would be an acceptable offering to the American public.

"The useful arts (says Emerson) are but reproductions, or new combinations by the wit of man, of the same natural benefactors. He no longer waits for favoring gales, but by means of steam realizes the fable of Eolus' bag, and carries the two-and-thirty winds in the boiler of his boat. To diminish friction, he paves the road with iron bars, and mounting a coach with a shipload of men, animals, and merchandise behind him, he darts through the country, from town to town, like an eagle or a swallow through the air. By the aggregate of these aids, how is the face of the world changed from the era of Noah to that of Napoleon! The private poor man hath cities, ships, canals, bridges, built for him. He goes to the post-office, and the human race run on his errands; to the workshop, and the human race read or write of all that happens, for him; to the court-house, and nations repair his wrongs. He sets his house upon the road, and the human race go forth every morning, and shovel out the snow, and cut a path for him."

The little volume from which we have made these few extracts excited the attention of many men of eminence, but its non-adaptability for the million prevented general popularity.

After the publication of "Nature," he contributed to a periodical called "The Dial," which did not commercially succeed.

In this magazine appeared several of his poems, and his "Three Lectures on the Times." The first was called "The Introductory;" the second, "The Conservative;" and the last, "The Transcendentalist."

For many of the chief points in the second lecture he is indebted to Goethe. Its argument is to prove that in proportion as we grow in age, wealth, position, and power, we become conservative. Many authors of the day are illustrations, such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore, Lamb, Goethe, Talfourd, &c. These were all great radicals in their early days, indeed very nearly verging on socialism. This is natural in man. When young and poor we are roused to *activity:* we grow old and rich, and consequently yearn for *repose.*

Reform is the activity of nations; conservatism its *repose;* and aristocracy its indolence.

His third essay is his finest, and from this he has been so frequently accused of being a "*Transcendentalist.*" Nothing is so easy, and nothing so unjust, as to affix a stigma to a man of this kind.

The enemies of progress joyfully catch them, and an air of impracticability or absurdity is thrown over the cause itself. What the fool cannot understand, and the knave will not, he declares to be either absurd or unintelligible, and the masses being easily led believe the slander without inquiring for themselves.

It is the fashion of the world to confound the appearance with the subject; the garb with the form; and hence the cry of Emerson's unintelligibility.

To abuse a man because he does not write like Joseph

Addison or Samuel Johnson is absurd: they may with the same reason condemn him for being himself, instead of somebody else. It is the criticism of the fool. Emerson certainly has a style more marked than most writers, but he has likewise a greater individuality of thought to accompany it. When a teacher utters profounder thought than the untaught have been accustomed to hear, the latter accuse him of being mystical or transcendental: just as boys of the lower form grumble at Euclid, and abuse their tutor. There seems something galling to an inferior mind in the confession of ignorance. It appears to wound self-love or egotism more than any other accusation. The generality would prefer to be suspected of knavery, than of boobyism. This will account for the virulence of the blockhead: to surpass him in genius or learning is to make him your deadly enemy. A warfare is always waged by the dull against the witty; they have the worst of it, and fools though they are, *they know it:* the alpha and omega of dulness is *to this extent, no more.* They are sensible of their stupidity. We admit this to be unpleasant, but it is unavoidable, and by way of consolation we recommend the old adage of—

"What can't be cured,
Must be endured."

So there's an end of the matter, and they had better rest in silence under the misfortune.

We remember in our young days that Lamb was attacked by a very solemn man (who only wanted the *fairy* head of Bottom, the weaver, to be the "complete animal"), in these

words :—"Mr. Lamb, you are always aiming at being witty, but you do not always succeed." The old humorist replied, "That's better, Mr. ***, than you, who are always aiming at being dull, and, I must say, you invariably succeed." We agree with "rare old Charles," that it is better to aim at the highest mark.

On the subject of Transcendentalism Emerson well observes :—

"There is transcendentalism, but no pure transcendentalist: that we know of none but the prophets and heralds of such a philosophy—that all who by strong bias of nature have leaned to the spiritual side in doctrine have stopped short of their goal. We have had many harbingers and forerunners, but of a purely spiritual life history has yet afforded no example. I mean, we have yet no man who has leaned entirely on his character, and eaten angels' food: who, trusting to his sentiments, found life made of miracles: who, working for universal aims, found himself fed, he knew not how: clothed, sheltered, and weaponed, he knew not how; and yet it was done by his own hands: only in the instinct of the lower animals we find the suggestion of the methods of it, and something higher than our understanding: the squirrel hoards nuts, and the bee gathers honey, without knowing what they do, and they are thus provided for without selfishness or disgrace."

This transcendentalism is evidently founded on Christian Doctrine; it is merely a paraphrase of Christ's words, "Take no thought of what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed; but do these things, which I command ye, and all the rest shall be added unto you."

Every new doctrine, when first preached, sounds like a tran-

scendentalism, and it is only when it becomes traditional that the mass receive it unchallenged; then any additional obscurity is swallowed as a matter of course. In another place he says, "Transcendentalism is the faith proper to a man in his integrity."

This is the pure religion of regenerate man, or of man in his primal state; it was, doubtless, the faith of Eden.

Now the discussion lies between the believers in the comparative perfectibility of man, and those who have no desire to rise into a loftier sphere; the wing and the wish are at variance in every imperfect nature, and so far as physical happiness is concerned, this discrepancy is fatal.

Mr. Emerson, in the next place, thus discourses of "Pure Nature." These extracts must not be read hastily, but well thought over.

"Language cannot paint it with his colors. It is too subtle. It is undefinable, unmeasurable, but we know that it pervades and contains us. . . . . In sickness, in languor, give us a strain of poetry or a profound sentence, and we are refreshed. . . . See how the deep divine thought demolishes centuries and millenniums, and makes itself present through all ages. . . . . A thrill passes through all men at the reception of new truth, or at the performance of a great action, which comes out of the heart of nature. In these communications the power to see is not separated from the will to do, but the insight proceeds from obedience, and the obedience proceeds from a joyful perception."

We must confess here that we cannot do justice to our author by picking a piece here, and another there, as each sen-

tence belongs so essentially to the one before, and the other after, that we are nearly misrepresenting the man, instead of presenting him to our readers. What, therefore, we must do for the future must be to indicate as nearly as we can, the idea pervading the article we have to comment on. It is not, however, an easy matter to do this with the next essay, "*Circles*," which we will pass to speak of the next, "*Intellect*," where we find the same difficulty. We go to the next one, "*Art*," and we still find it as difficult to give the leading idea. We could give sentences without number, eloquent, poetical, golden, but, as we have already given a number from this little volume of essays—sufficient, we think, to cause the reader to go to the Book itself—once for all, therefore, we must refer him to the fountain head, the essays themselves, confident that he will be richly rewarded for his pains.

Besides these Essays, our author has published several separate orations and lectures: "Man Thinking, an Oration," "An Address delivered at Cambridge," "Literary Ethics, an Oration," "The Method of Nature," "Man the Reformer," and "The Young American." We select a few sentences from these.

"The theory of Books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him—life; it went from him—truth. It came to him—short-lived actions; it went from him—immortal thoughts. It came to him—business; it went from him—poetry. It was dead fact; now it is quick thought. It can stand and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to

the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.

"The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action passed by as a loss of Power. It is the raw material out of which the intellect moulds her splendid products. A strange process, too, this by which experience is converted into thought as a mulberry leaf is converted into satin. The manufacture goes forward at all hours."

Mark the more than morning glow thrown over the opening of "*the Address.*"

"In this refulgent summer it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life. The grass grows, the buds burst; the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers; the air is full of birds, and sweet with the breath of the pine, the balm of Gilead, and the new hay. Night brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade. Through the transparent darkness pour the stars their almost spiritual rays. Man under them seems a young child, and his huge globe a toy. The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eye again for the crimson dawn. The mystery of nature was never displayed more happily. The corn and the wine have been freely dealt to all creatures, and the never broken silence with which the old bounty goes forward has not yielded yet one word of explanation."

The Address, of which this is the opening, did not please the professors, and one of them remonstrated. We give Emerson's reply, as it is a part of his spiritual history.

"What you say about the Discourse at Divinity College is just what I might expect from your truth and charity, combined with

your known opinions. I am not a stock or a stone, as one said in the old time, and could not feel but pain in saying some things in that place and presence which I supposed would meet with dissent, and the dissent I may say of dear friends and benefactors of mine. Yet, as my conviction is perfect in the substantial truth of the doctrines of this discourse, and is not very new, you will see at once that it must appear very important that it be spoken; and I thought I could not pay the nobleness of my friends so mean a compliment as to suppress my opposition to their supposed views out of fear of offence. I would rather say to them—These things look thus to me, to you otherwise. Let us say our uttermost word, and be the all-pervading truth, as it surely will, judge between us. Either of us would, I doubt not, be equally apprised of his error. Meantime I shall be admonished by this expression of your thought to revise with great care the 'Address' before it is printed (for the use of the class), and I heartily thank you for this expression of your tried toleration and love."

This was followed by a sermon against Emerson's views, a copy of which was sent to him with a letter, to which he replied as follows:

"I ought sooner to have replied to your kind letter of last week, and the Sermon it accompanied. The letter was right manly and noble. The sermon, too, I have read with attention. If it assails any doctrine of mine—perhaps I am not so quick to see it as writers generally—certainly I did not feel any disposition to depart from my habitual contentment that you should say your thought, whilst I say mine. I believe I must tell you what I think of my new position. It strikes me very oddly that good and wise men, and Cambridge and Boston, should think of raising me into an object of criticism. I have always been, from my very incapa-

city of methodical writing, 'a chartered libertine,' free to worship and free to rail, lucky when I could make myself understood, but never esteemed near enough to the institutions and mind of society to deserve the notice of the masters of literature and religion. I have appreciated fully the advantages of my position, for I well know that there is no scholar less willing or less able to be a polemic. I could not give account of myself, if challenged. I could not possibly give you one of the arguments you cruelly hint at, on which any doctrine of mine stands. For I do not know what arguments mean in reference to any expression of a thought. I delight in telling what I think; but if you ask me why I dare say so, or why it is so, I am the most helpless of mortal men. I do not even see that either of these questions admits of an answer, so that in the present posture of affairs, when I see myself suddenly raised to the importance of a heretic, I am very uneasy when I advert to the supposed duties of such a personage, who is to make good his thesis against all comers. I certainly shall do no such thing. I shall read what you and other good men write, as I have always done, glad when you speak my thoughts, and skipping the page that has nothing for me. I shall go on just as before, seeing whatever I can, and telling what I see; and, I suppose, with the same fortune that has hitherto attended me; the joy of finding that my abler and better brothers, who work with the sympathy of society, loving and beloved, do now and then unexpectedly confirm my perception, and find my nonsense is only their own thought in motley. And so I am your affectionate servant, R. W. E."

We have now spoken of about one half of Mr. Emerson's labors. He has published a second series of Essays, and a volume of Poems. The Second Series of Essays are nine in number, and consist of the Poet, Experience, Character, Man-

ners, Gifts, Nature, Politics, Nominalist and Realist, and New England Reformers. It would occupy too much space to speak of these in detail, or to quote largely from them, laden as they are with original thought, apt expression, and felicitous illustration. We believe no one has ever gone to the heart of the matter like Mr. Emerson has in his Essay on the Poet. It is a fine statement of the intellectuality of Poetry—not Hazlitt, nor Wilson, nor Macaulay, nor Talfourd, nor Lamb, —and we believe these are the most eminent among modern critics who have ever got anear the subject; they have discoursed *about* it, and essayed *on* it, and lectured *of* it, but not one of these ever got to the head of the matter like our author. Arriving there, he tells us of it, and we are for ever satisfied, for at last he has expounded the secret, and with him *we know*, but *feel* not. It is a difficult matter to refrain from quoting, but necessity compels us. And though we may not quote further, we have still something to say about them; we have to record our regret that these earnest, sincere, and truthful words should be so little known—so little known in his own country even—we have to record our regret that no able brother of universal truth has stepped forth to rescue his name from the aspersions cast upon his character as a teacher. Carlyle, it is true, introduced him to the English public; but it is one thing to introduce a man to a new world, and another thing to help and aid him therein. It may be that Carlyle thought an introduction was sufficient; it may even be that Emerson thought so also, and trusted to the intrinsic worth of his thought to work its way in the minds of men; but still we cannot help expressing our regret that the greatest man in the 19th century should be

so little known, so barefacedly robbed, and so carped at by the Pharisees of the day, without any one stepping forth to take up his cause, and show that he is not the person they represent him.

We were going to say, to any *unprejudiced* mind Emerson's writings must commend themselves; we were going to say this, when the difficulty struck us of finding *any* unprejudiced mind. We are all prejudiced, either by birth, or habit, or education, and therefore we can only hope for two classes who will appreciate Emerson--the highly cultured and the ignorant; these last, however, must be those that think for themselves. It is the middle class, the men who have a smattering of all things and know nothing entirely, to whom Emerson appears as an Atheist, a Pantheist, and an Infidel. To the first he approves himself a man—a great and worthy teacher; and to the last he is new life, new light—a spiritual sun which shines as freely, as warmly on their hearts as the sun of nature does upon their bodies. We have *felt* the truth of what we say, and therefore do not feel any diffidence in telling our experience. We belong to the lowest class; we have believed with our fathers and elders, we have doubted and thought, thought earnestly and long, and found comfort, and joy, and pleasure in the instruction Emerson has afforded us. His views have been to us a new existence, or rather have shown us the true value of the existence God has already given to us. His views have set us on our feet again, and gave us hope, and heart, and courage, when all else has proved vain, authoritative, and arbitrary. Our study of Emerson has not been exclusive; we have had time to taste of most of the poetry and philosophy writ-

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There are two descriptions of popularity which are essentially different; the first is founded on the human heart, the other is merely supported by the conventionalities of the present time. Popularity is, therefore, not a sure test; we should then first inquire what kind of popularity an author possesses before we decide upon his relative chance of immortality.

How many great celebrities have passed away? Who was so popular as Churchill in his own day? Yet he is now seldom read or quoted. His popularity was built on a figment of Human Nature, and not based on the breath of the Heart of Man. He was a satirist, and not a poet; the personal dies with the man and his victim, but the universal will live for ever. In like manner, to descend to the present day, we can come pretty near a prophetic glance into the future, by carefully selecting the characteristics of any author, and judging him by that unerring standard. We may give as an instance Mr. Thackeray, whose productions are now so generally read and lauded; the

slightest glance at him will convince the critic that when the peculiar phase of society he treats on shall pass away, he will likewise go with it. It is also worthy of observation that the very fact which might in some cases preserve it becomes its destroyer. It might naturally be supposed that it would be prized as a record of the past; but it seems as though the interest died away with the thing described.

On this ground we fear that Mr. Willis will not be an enduring writer. The persiflage and piquancy of his style, which are now so enticing, will in a few years become the obscurers of his fame, just as the pertness and vivacity of the blooming girl become intolerable in the matron. Posterity demands something substantial, condensed, and truthful. It is a very close-judging critic, and all personal considerations are lost upon it. Appeals to feeling are unknown; it is the Rhadamanthus of authors. The present race, on the other hand, are too apt to overlook the solid merits of a work, and be taken by the tinsel of the outside garb; they choose beauty, grace, or accomplishment, before virtue or truth. Many honorable, noble natures sit in the judgment-seat and discourse most excellent music, but their audiences grow weary and thin away, till they themselves depart unheeded; while the dancing girl, organ-grinder, tumbler, or Punch and Judy, have a ready and numerous crowd of listeners.

However much this may be deplored, it cannot be helped. The present race is not instructed by its contemporaries, but by its ancestors. The writers of *the day* only amuse; the living man is listened to only as long as he is entertaining or exciting; but the grave sanctifies the voice of the dead, and arrests the

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Intellect is even more unvarying than faith. Plato, Euclid, Aristotle, and the Greek dramatists, remain undiminished, like the pyramids. Time consolidates the achievements of poetry, philosophy, and mathematics. All minds, even now, bow to the masters of thought; but the religious faith of these great

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This fact will lead us to a better estimate of our living authors than we shall attain without keeping it fully in view. We are aware there is a certain instinct in our nature, which seems to forbid or modify any admiration of one with whom we are in the habit of frequent intercourse. Our egotism steps in and places before the brightness of their inner mind, the blinding or intercepting screen of those personal infirmities or necessities which are part and parcel of human nature, and the absence of which places a man out of the pale of humanity itself. All see and feel the palpable injustice of this mode of judging, but inevitably fall into it.

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ten in the English language from Chaucer downwards; and we again declare that we know of no author that is so full of suggestion, speaks so directly to the heart, and is so free from the prejudices of the time, and the fashions in which we live. Bacon, the great Lord Bacon, sinks to a mere politician alongside Emerson. But we do not, nevertheless, undervalue Bacon; he was a great man in his time, and exercised a wide influence upon his age and ages after. But he was neither so deep-seeing nor so true-spoken as Emerson; for proof take any Essay these two have written on the *same* subject—'Love,' for instance —and compare them, and see how much one excels the other. Bacon's spirit, great as it was (and it was marvellous for his age), never mounted so high, never extended so wide, never descended so low as Emerson's. There is one reason, however, that is obvious why our author should greatly eclipse these luminaries, and that is, he has had all their light, all their genius to assist his own. We can trace in his writings many thoughts he has got from Chaucer, Sidney, Herbert, Shakspeare, Bacon, the Elder Dramatists, from the Greeks, from the Romans, from the Hindoos, from the Scandinavians, from the Germans, and lastly from his own experience, on which last he himself sets most value, and justly, seeing that all *his* teachers' worth was thus obtained. Truth being universal, and not anything exclusive, to those who will receive it is as common as the air we breathe, and, like the best of all things, should be most acceptable. Emerson and his philosophy are as remarkable things in this age as are the locomotive, the electric telegraph, and the daguerreotype. They are, too, exercising as deep an influence, slowly but surely winning men to look

rightly at things, and with their own eyes. He is a pioneer as brave, and as indomitable in clearing away obstructions to the growth of mind, as are those of the West in clearing the soil. Many a great work and many a noble deed will yet take its date from his words, and if they have the power to produce such fruit, and we affirm that they have to a high degree, who shall say this man is an opponent to Christianity? Who, indeed, but those who make that doctrine a business, and not a rule of life! We have one other phase in which we wish to present our author, and that is, as a poet. The selections we have made from his prose have already given evidence of his poetic faculty, not as a poet of passion, but of reason.

Mr. Emerson possesses so many characteristics of genius that his want of universality is the more to be regretted; the leading feature of his mind is intensity; he is deficient in heart sympathy. Full to overflowing with intellectual appreciation, he is incapable of that embracing reception of impulses which gives to Byron so large a measure of influence and fame. Emerson is elevated, but not expansive; his flight is high, but not extensive. He has a magnificent vein of the purest gold, but it is not a mine. To vary our illustration somewhat, he is not a world, but a district; a lofty and commanding eminence we admit, but only a very small portion of the true Poet's universe. What, however, he has done is permanent, and America will always in after times be proud of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and consider him one of her noblest sons.

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A few quotations will illustrate our meaning, and we hope establish our judgment; at all events, it will enable the reader to decide upon either our discretion or our candor.

We select a passage from "The Healing of the Daughter of Jairus." The touching simplicity of this is known to every reader of the Bible. Mr. Willis thus renders it:

"They passed in.
The *spice lamps* in the alabaster urns
Burned dimly, and the *white and fragrant smoke*
Curled indolently on the chamber walls.
The *silken curtains slumbered* in their folds—
Not e'en a tassel stirring in the air—
And as the Saviour stood beside the bed,
And prayed inaudible, the RULER heard
The quickening division of his breath
As he grew earnest inwardly. There came
A gradual brightness o'er his calm, sad face:
And drawing nearer to the bed, he moved
The *silken curtains* silently apart,
And looked upon the maiden."

This short passage displays almost every peculiarity which sacred poetry should not possess. It is pretty, very pretty; but as far from truth and nature as a French milliner is from the Venus de Medicis. We have italicized a few of the most glaring violations of propriety.

We give one more extract to complete the picture: it immediately follows the previous quotation.

"Like a form
Of matchless sculpture in her sleep she lay—
The linen vesture folded on her breast,
And over it her white transparent hands,

The blood still rosy in their tapering nails.
A line of pearl ran through her parted lips,
And in her nostrils, spiritually thin,
The breathing curve was mockingly like life:
And round beneath the faintly tinted skin,
Ran the light branches of the azure veins,
And on her cheek the jet lash o'erlay,
Matching the arches pencilled on her brow,—
Her hair had been unbound, and falling loose
Upon her pillow, hid her small round ears
In curls of glossy blackness, and about
Her polished neck, scarce touching it, they hung,
Like airy shadows floating as they slept.
'T was heavenly beautiful."

With this crowning climax we close this attempt to diminish into mere prettiness the sublime simplicity of this gospel narrative.

We need hardly point out, to the most casual reader, the singular taste which has dictated the selection of the images and epithets of this piece of sacred verse.

As a curious specimen of scriptural vocabulary we may quote the following:—

"Spice lamps;" "alabaster urns;" "white and fragrant smoke;" "curled indolently;" "*silken curtains* slumbered in their folds;" "silken curtains,"

repeated in a few lines further down the page.

The description of the dead maiden, in the next quotation, is

rather an anatomical auctioneer Robins cataloguing her limbs, than a fine picture of death, sketched by the hand of a poet.

Our readers must pardon our placing in juxtaposition to this elegant elaboration, a passage from Byron. However well known these lines may be, their reiteration now will do more to show the difference between false and true poetry than a volume of critical analysis.

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead,
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress;
Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,
And marked the mild, angelic air,
The rapture of repose that's there,
The fixed yet tender traits that streak
The languor of that pallid cheek;—
And but for that sad, shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,
Where 'cold obstruction's' apathy
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it would impart
The doom he dreads yet dwells upon,—
Some moments, aye, a treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power,
So fair, so calm, so softly sealed,
The first, last look by death revealed."

Although these vices of style pervade to a great extent

the poems of Mr. Willis, there are many occasions when he writes with force and plainness. The following opening to his poem entitled "Rizpah with her Sons," is not open to our former objections. We dare say, however, that many will consider our former quotations the best poetry; and we fear that the poet has himself been frequently led to consult the taste of his admirers, rather than his own.

"'Bread for my mother!' said the voice of one
Darkening the door of Rizpah. She looked up—
And lo! the princely countenance and mien
Of dark-browed Armeni. The eye of Saul,
The very voice and presence of the king,
Limb, port, and majesty, were present there,
Mocked like an apparition in her Son.
Yet as he stooped his forehead to her hand
With a kind smile, a something of his mother
Unbent the haughty arching of his lip,
And through the darkness of the widow's heart
Trembled a nerve of tenderness, that shook
Her thought of pride all suddenly to tears."

It is a conclusive proof of the bad taste of over ornament that it always fails of effect when so unsparingly laid on. The mind readily welcomes the poetical and intensed lines:

"And through the darkness of the widow's heart
Trembled a nerve of tenderness, that shook
Her thought of pride all suddenly to tears."

We here feel that the metaphor is justified by the passion

of the scene; but the besetting sin is too strong, and after a few more lines we come to these:

"Was this the fairest of the sons of Saul?
The violet's cup was harsh to his blue eye,
Less agile was the fierce barb's fiery step;
His voice drew hearts to him: his smile was like
The incarnation of some blessed dream,
Its joyousness so sunned the gazer's eye!
Fair were his locks: his snowy teeth divided
A bow of love, drawn with a scarlet thread.
His cheek was like the moist heart of the rose,
And but for nostrils of that breathing fire
That turns the lion back, and limbs as lithe
As is the velvet muscle of the pard,
Mephibosheth had been too fair for man."

It really seems, on reading these lines, that the author had deliberately resolved to rack his fancy for the most outrageous conceits and hyperboles that he could invent.

It is pleasant to leave this strained metaphorical style, and come to such verses as these.

"THIRTY-FIVE.

Oh! weary heart, thou'rt half way home!
We stand on life's meridian height,
As far from childhood's morning come,
As to the grave's forgetful night.
Give youth and hope a parting tear,
Look onward with a placid brow—

Hope promised but to bring us here,
And reason takes the guidance now.
One backward look—the last—the last,
One silent year—for youth is past!"

These are natural, manly verses, and show how much Mr. Willis has lost by not cultivating this simpler style. The whole of this poem is so good that we shall quote it.

"Who goes with hope and passion back?
Who comes with me and memory on?
Oh! lonely looks that downward track—
Joy's music hushed—Hope's roses gone.
To pleasure and her giddy troop
Farewell, without a sigh or tear!
But heart gives way, and spirits droop,
To think that love may leave us here."

There is a pathos in the last line which had Mr. Willis more frequently displayed, would have rendered him one of the most charming of modern American Poets.

"Have we no charm when youth has flown,
Midway to death left sad and lone"

"Yet stay, as 'twere a twilight star
That sends its thread across the wave,
I see a brightening light from far,
That shows a path beyond the grave,
And now—bless God!—its golden line
Comes o'er, and lights my shadowy way,

And shows the dear hand clasped in mine!
But list what those sweet voices say:

The better land's in sight,
And, by its chastening light,
All love for life's midway is driven,
Save her whose clasped hand will bring thee on to Heaven."

The close of this is certainly too much in the old orthodox school, but they are almost entirely free from the faults of style we have before objected to.

There seems to us a great affinity between the poetry of Barry Cornwall and Willis; not so much the imitation of the younger one, as a natural resemblance. If Mr. Proctor excels his younger competitor in verse, Mr. Willis has the advantage over him in prose, and they will make an admirable parallel in some future poetical Plutarch.

Who would believe that the author of the tinsel tawdry verses we have presented to our readers had written the following natural poem:

"SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

"I love to look on a scene like this,
Of wild and careless play,
And persuade myself that I am not old,
And my locks are not yet grey.

"For it stirs the blood in an old man's heart,
And makes his pulses fly,

To catch the thrill of a happy voice,
And the light of a pleasant eye.

"I have walked the world for fourscore years,
And they say that I am old,
That my heart is ripe for the reaper Death,
And my years are well nigh told.

"It is very true: it is very true,
I am old and I bide my time,
But my heart will leap at a scene like this,
And half renew my prime.

"Play on, play on, I am with you there,
In the midst of your merry ring,
I can feel the thrill of the daring jump,
And the rush of the breathless swing.

"I hide with you in the fragrant hay,
And I whoop the smothered call,
And my feet slip up on the seedy floor,
And I care not for the fall.

"I am willing to die when my time shall come,
And I shall be glad to go,
For the world at best is a weary place,
And my pulse is getting low.

"But the grave is dark, and the heart will fail
In treading its gloomy way,
And it whiles my heart from its dreariness,
To see the young so gay."

Some critics have contended that this poem is deficient in sympathetic consistency, inasmuch as the latter part differs from the commencement, and consequently jars that fine artistic sense which is inseparable from the pure poetic mind.

This is, however, a hypercriticism we shall not venture into, and we merely name it as a critical problem for the reader's entertainment. We well remember the first time we read these verses many years ago, and they became a part of the heart's household from that very hour.

Had Mr. Willis often written in this style criticism would have been needless, for they would have at once settled the question by seizing upon the hearts of all readers.

We think it the unalienable right of every writer to be judged by his whole case: yet how frequently is an author condemned for failure in one branch of literature, while his triumph in other and loftier departments is forgotten or neglected! We think in this we perceive a great difference between American and English criticism. In the latter country an author's reputation generally remains where it was before the publication of the unsuccessful work; if he gains nothing, he loses nothing, except possibly a portion of that *prestige* which always accompanies success—he has a *corps de reserve* to retire upon. But in America a writer may lose all on account of one failure, and be well abused into the bargain. There is a monomaniacal spirit of detraction in their critical press which is truly astounding, and would be ludicrous were it not for the injurious tendency it has upon the literature of the country. Agreeably to this view, we not only wish to consider Mr. Willis as a poet, but also to test his powers in the

various branches of that divine art. We have already weighed him in the scale of sacred descriptive poetry, and found him wanting, and have likewise expressed our admiration of his occasional verses; we now present him in another light, as a writer of devotional impulse, and as a proof quote the "Dedication Hymn," sung at the consecration of Hanover Street Church, Boston.

"The perfect world by Adam trod,
Was the first temple, built by God:
His fiat laid the corner-stone,
And reared his pillars one by one.
He hung its starry roof on high—
The broad illimitable sky;
He spread its pavements, green and bright,
And curtained it with morning light.

"The mountains in their places stood—
The sea—the sky—and all was good:
And when its first pure praises rang,
The morning stars together sang—
Lord, 't is not ours to make the sea,
And earth, and sky, a house for thee:
But in thy sight our offering stands,
A humbler temple made with hands."

This is certainly better than the descriptive poetry on sacred subjects, but the same defect spoils this, although in a lesser degree; the hymn is very pretty, and herein the failure consists.

The next specimen we shall give is certainly a startling contrast to the foregoing piece, but this is, perhaps, the truest way of ascertaining the real vein of an author. The critics, cold-blooded and calculating too often, oppose this plan on the argument that the violent reaction prevents the palate from regaining its natural taste. In despite of this we shall give the following city lyric:

"Come out, love, the night is enchanting,
The moon hangs just over Broadway,
The stars are all lighted and panting
(Hot weather up there, I dare say).
'T is seldom that coolness entices,
And love is no better for chilling,
But come up to Thompson's for ices,
And cool your warm heart for a shilling.

* * * * *

Oh! on by St. Paul's and the Astor,
Religion seems very ill planned:
For one day we list to the pastor,
For six days we list to the band.
The sermon may dwell on the future,
The organ your pulses may calm,
When—past—that remembered cachuca,
Upsets both the sermon and psalm.
Oh! pity the love that must utter
While goes a swift omnibus by,
Though sweet is I scream, when the flutter
Of fans shows thermometer's high.
But if what I bawl, or I mutter,
Falls into your eye but to die,
Oh! the dew that falls into the gutter,
Is not more unhappy than I."

We think our readers will agree that Mr. Willis is not very successful as a comic writer in verse. We will, however, give him one more trial before we decide that point.

"TO THE LADY IN THE CHEMISETTE WITH BLACK BUTTONS.

"I know not who thou art, thou lovely one.
Thine eyes were drooped, thy lips half sorrowful,
Yet thou didst eloquently smile on me,
While handing up thy sixpence through the hole
Of that o'er-freighted omnibus!—Ah, me!—
The world is full of meetings such as this;
A thrill—a voiceless challenge and reply,
And sudden partings after—we may pass,
And know not of each other's nearness now.
Thou in the Knickerbocker Line, and I
Lone in the Waverley! Oh! life of pain,
And even should I pass where thou dost dwell,
Nay, see thee in the basement taking tea,
So cold is this inexorable world,
I must glide on. I dare not feast mine eye,
I dare not make articulate my love,
Nor o'er the iron rails that hem thee in,
Venture to throw to thee my innocent card,
Not knowing thy papa."

Mr. Willis seems to be fond of the mock-heroic style of verse, for we have another copy of verses to "The Lady in the White Dress whom I helped into the Omnibus." We shall, however, not quote any portion of this, as it is in a similar strain to the other; our readers will decide as to what amount of humor there is displayed in these pieces. In another phase of banter,

we think Mr. Willis shows considerable cleverness; there is an elegance about his frivolity which lends a grace to the effort not otherwise belonging to it.

"LOVE IN A COTTAGE.

"You may talk of love in a cottage,
And bowers of trellised vine,
Of nature bewitchingly simple,
And milkmaids half divine.
* * * * * * *
But give me a sly flirtation,
By the light of a chandelier,
With music to play in the pauses,
And nobody very near.
Or a seat on a silken sofa,
With a glass of pure old wine,
And mamma too blind to discover
The small white hand in mine.
Your love in a cottage is hungry,
Your vine is a nest for flies,
Your milkmaid shocks the graces,
And simplicity talks of pies.
* * * * * * *
True love is at home on a carpet,
And mightily likes his ease,
And true love has an eye for a dinner,
And starves beneath shady trees.
His wing is the fan of a lady,
His foot's an invisible thing,
And his arrow is tipped with a jewel,
And shot from a silver string."

These verses are highly characteristic of the writer's genius. Nature is pronounced somewhat vulgar and inconvenient, and the elegances of life are considered as the pure Ideal. But we mightily object to Mr. Willis's definition of elegance; the true elegance is the ideal of human nature; the elegance of the fop is as far removed from this as are the poles asunder. The Arcadia of our poet very much depends upon the upholsterer, the milliner, and the jeweller. His nature is artificial, and, instead of grassy meads, with heaven's dew glistening on them, they are covered with Turkey carpets; the shady banks are removed, and velvet couches placed in their stead; the murmuring brooks are muffled, and the birds driven away to make room for an Italian Opera. This may be civilization in a very high degree, but it is not the natural elegance of man; one of the old dramatists has admirably touched upon the Ideal and the Conventional in those celebrated lines alluding to our Saviour, as,

> "The first true gentleman that e'er wore
> Earth about him."

We may mention as a singular proof of the artificiality of Mr. Willis's style, the curious fact that his bantering or mock-heroic verses are scarcely distinguishable from his scriptural poems. We give part of "The Declaration" as evidence of our statement.

> "'T was late, and the gay company was gone,
> And light lay soft on the deserted room
> From alabaster vases, and a scent
> Of orange leaves and sweet verbena came

Through the unshuttered window on the air,
And the rich pictures, with their dark old tints,
Hung like a twilight landscape, and all things
Seemed hushed into a slumber. Isabel,
The dark-eyed, spiritual Isabel,
Was leaning on her harp, and I had stayed
To whisper what I could not, when the crowd
Hung on her look like worshippers—
* * * *
She upraised
Her forehead from its resting place, and looked
Earnestly on me. *She had been asleep.*"

This is very heavy trifling.

But the chief test of how far Mr. Willis is a humorous writer is to be decided by his "Lady Jane, a Humorous Novel in Rhyme." Here there can be no mistake in the matter. He himself avows boldly his deliberate and determined intention to be funny. It is not left in doubt, as was the intention of the farce which was performed some time since at Burton's Theatre. After a few nights it was withdrawn by the author, who declared that the actors and audience had certainly mistaken the nature of the piece: he had intended it for a farce, but they had actually considered it as a serious drama. Had the author followed Mr. Willis's advice he would have prevented the dilemma.

To return to the humorous novel in verse. The following description of the heroine is very felicitous:

"Yet there was fire within her soft grey eye,
And room for pressure on her lips of rose;
And few who saw her gracefully move by,

Imagined that her feelings slept, or froze.
You may have seen a cunning florist tie
A thread about a bud, which never blows,
But with shut chalice from the sun and rain,
Hoards up the morn—and such was Lady Jane.

* * * *

Some stanzas back we left the ladies going
At six to dress for dinner. Time to dine
I always give in poetry, well knowing
That to jump over it in half a line,
Looks (let us be sincere, dear Muse) like showing
Contempt we do not feel for meat and wine.
Dinner! ye gods!—What is there more respectable?
For eating, who, save Byron, ever checked a belle?"

We have read this poem through, consisting of two or three hundred verses in the Boccaccian or Don Juan stanza, but with the exception of an occasional play upon words, we do not recognise any of those strokes of humor and unexpected contrasts which render Byron so charming. Still there are a pleasant banter and gentlemanly quizzing about many of the best stanzas, which enable a reader to get through it. There are, however, few passages which will repay a second perusal.

We do not charge this upon Mr. Willis as a fault, because his forte is evidently prose, where his vivacity and polished style serve him admirably. His want of earnestness is fatal to him as a poet, but helps him in those lighter sketches where he seems quite at home.

We have no space to consider Mr. Willis as a dramatist; we must therefore content ourselves by remarking that, as his plays have not retained possession of the stage, he adds

one more to that long list of writers who have been seduced by the temptation of popular applause to over-estimate their powers. We may be permitted to add, that the total absence of dramatic power in his writings is so marked, that we should have been more astonished at success than failure: we consequently merely chronicle his attempt rather as a biographical fact than as a poetical feat.

There are few things more anomalous in the history of literature than the present position of the American stage. Out of eight theatres in the metropolis of the western world seven are owned by foreigners, the only exception being the small and somewhat inferior one called the National, in Chatham street, under the control of Mr. Chanfrau. We are informed that it is almost impossible for an American to get a play produced, however adapted it may be for popular representation. We are perfectly aware that many will allege the want of dramatic genius as a sufficient and conclusive reason for this singular state of things; but we may be allowed to observe that so long as this *excluding* or *prohibiting* system exists, there never will be any genius shown in this branch of poetry: encouragement is essentially necessary for every product, and for none more than for intellectual variety.

There is, perhaps, nothing more indicative of a healthy national state than a legitimate drama, and the greatest critics in England have thought that to this species of excellence England owes more than to her victorious fleets. It certainly reflects more of a country's glory than any other shape of mind, and a glance at the past will confirm this view.

The victories of Greece have died away. Marathon is only

a barren and desolate plain, but the papyrus on which Æschylus inscribed his Prometheus is peopled still with his undying characters. How transient are the mightiest triumphs of force—how everlasting the poet's thought; every year deadens the shout of the warrior, but the voice of the poet rolls down the corridors of the Future, awakening on its passage, like so many echoes, the sympathies of the unborn millions—nations yet to be; England will always be immortal in the world's esteem as the land of Shakspeare, when her colonies and her commerce have perished.

As we shall have a fitter place to discuss the want of an American Drama, we shall reserve what we have to say on this subject for that opportunity.

It frequently occurs that men run against difficulties which they have no occasion to meet; this is the case with Mr. Willis. In the intoxication of his vanity he believed he could drive his Pegasus to its dramatic Parnassus, but he found obstacles in the way he littled dreamed of.

This reminds us of an accident a lively novelist related one evening, as having happened to himself. Having occasion to dine with a friend, he jumped into a cab, and told the man to drive as fast as he could to Russell square. He had not been long in the conveyance before he felt assured the man was drunk; now he drove against a cart—then he went into an oyster stall. He extricated himself from this dilemma by rushing upon a heavy wagon; unable to overcome this obstacle, he violated the proprieties of driving by disorganizing a funeral procession; his efforts reached a climax by mistaking the footpath for the road, and, immediately after, a sharp shock, and then a dead

stand-still, convinced the rider inside that the cab was inextricably fixed. Springing out, our friend observed that the man was in the middle of the footpath, and that the wheel was locked in a lamp-post. Indignantly demanding what the fellow meant, he received the following reply:—"Who the devil would have thought of finding a post in the middle of the road?" We fear this will be our author's apology for writing plays—he had no idea he should find any obstacles in his way!

We must now consider the prose writings of Mr. Willis, and we are glad to say that although he displays the self-same peculiarities we have condemned in his poetic musings, yet the less condensed style of composition renders them less apparent, from the greater diffusion of the fault. Once for all, we must here make the remark that he has very little self-reliance, and, indeed, not a particle of dignity; there is a total want of independence about him, which at times becomes absurdly deferential. He seems to have made Polonius his study, but, unlike that wise old man, he has not the same excuse. The Danish Minister believed he had a madman to humor, and not a rational being to converse with; and we have always considered this as one of Shakspeare's most wonderful touches of Nature. "Very like a whale" was a perfectly accountable expression from Polonius to a prince whom he believed to be crazy, but when Mr. Willis expects that we shall coincide with his dittoes to London dilettanti, he is wofully mistaken. He seems delighted with everything he saw and heard in the British capital; he never bares the hideous mass of suffering under that velvet pall of aristocracy. Our space warns us that we

must finish what we have to say without further loss of time. We have not judged him without the very best available evidence in his favor, by his own works; we say this on the presumption that he would subpœna these witnesses to speak his character in case of a literary trial.

Having just completed the perusal of Mr. Willis's collected works, our impression is this:—He is a lively, entertaining writer, full of conceits, quips, and cranks, but destitute of that breadth and vigor of mind which give vitality to a writer; he is content, swallow-like, to skim on the surface, and never feels power or inclination to turn up the hidden beauties of nature or thought. He is content with chatting in the Muses' boudoir, at a morning call, and leaves without producing any impression. He is, therefore, only an occasional visitor, and not their intimate and friend. He is sometimes employed to carry a message, but is never treated as their interpreter or ambassador. We close our notice of Mr. Willis with a very characteristic anecdote of Bulwer, as related to us by an eye-witness:—

Having been invited, at some three weeks' notice, by the author of Pelham to a grand dejeuner, or Fête Champêtre, at his Villa near Fulham, Mr. —— upon the afternoon in question found himself driving towards the scene of action. On his arrival there, about two in the afternoon, he joined a large and fashionable company there assembled. Various groups were scattered about, occupied in different ways; a party here were engaged in archery—a party there were listening to some manuscript verses by some unpublished genius, who had basely

taken advantage of that courteous forbearance so nearly allied to martyrdom to inflict his undeveloped poems. At a little distance, pacing up and down, were a brace of political economists, busily engaged in paying off the national debt, and very properly inattentive to their own tailors' claims. On the bank of the river was the celebrated novelist himself, chatting to a small party of ladies, one of whom was occupied in fishing with so elegant a rod that Sappho herself need not have despised to use it. Of a sudden there was a faint and highly lady-like scream. "A bite, a bite, Sir Edward," was the fascinating ejaculation of the fair angler. With that presence of mind so eminently characteristic of the beautiful part of creation, she pulled the rod from the water, and there, sure enough, was a monstrous fish, almost as large as a perch. While the poor little thing kicked violently about, the ladies cried with one accord for Sir Edward to secure the struggling prisoner by unhooking it. The baronet looked imploringly first at the ladies, then at the fish, and still more pathetically at his flesh-colored kid gloves, innocent of a stain. Sir Edward's alarm was apparent; he would have shrunk from brushing the down from off a butterfly's wing, lest he should soil the virgin purity of his kids, but a fish —it was too horrible. The ladies, who seemed to take a fiendish delight in torturing their fastidious host, insisted upon his releasing the poor captive, and appealed loudly to his romantic sympathies. At length one of them more lively and mischievous than the rest, seized the rod and actually waved it close to Sir Edward's face; throwing his hand out to protect himself, his fingers came in contact with the scaly

phenomenon;—then nerving himself for the deed, he resolutely seized the dangerous animal, and, extricating it from the hook, threw it into its native element. Lamb has in one of his essays observed, how would men like if some superior being were to go out *manning*, and, letting down a hook through the air towards the earth, baited with a beefsteak, draw a man up to heaven, roaring like a bull, with a hook in his gills.

Our friend was cordially welcomed by the fish releaser, and finding several of his old friends, rambled about the grounds, chatting first with one, and then another, until he felt all the vulgar sensations of hunger. It was now five o'clock, and no symptoms of the dejeuner; he had unfortunately breakfasted early, and had purposely abstained from lunching, his knowledge of fashionable French being so limited as to translate erroneously the word "dejeuner," to mean a meal of that kind. At eight o'clock in the evening the lunch bell rang, and a nonchalant rush was made towards the house. The blaze of light ushered them to the room where all was laid out in the perfection of Gunter's best manner; but judge our famished friend's dismay, when a rapid survey, like a Napoleon's glance, discovered only the elegances of eating, the ornaments of the appetite, and not its substantialities. Jellies in the shape of crystal mounds; cakes battlemented like the baronial dwellings of feudal tyrants. Trifles light as air, swelling over Chinese dwellings, crimson flushed with vermilion sweets; piles of bon-bons and scented crackers, gorgeously gilded and rainbow colored. At each side were flesh-colored masses of ice creams, flanked by a regiment of infinitesimal mince pies, raspberry tarts, and triangular cheese-cakes. At solemn intervals

were Maraschino, Curaçoa, Noyau, and other liqueurs, confined in small decanters, about the size of Eau de Cologne phials, while scattered around were goblets to drink out of, about the size of overgrown thimbles. It was a diabolical improvement (so far as starvation went) on the feast of Tantalus. A glass of water would have had a gigantic look in our friend's eyes perfectly titanic. A narrower scrutiny discovered to his longing sight two dishes, one a tureen of palish, green-looking water, where there were a few diminutive new potatoes, swimming for their lives, and trying to escape, which they did with ease, from the abortive efforts of our friend, who, with a ladle, was doing his best to capture one, to satisfy the cravings of his appetite.

The other dish was one of fritters, and presented the appearance of having been made out of Sir Edward's kid gloves dipped in batter, and then elaborately fried. We must draw a veil over our friend's sufferings. After securing a spoonful of jelly—one of the afore-named small forced-meat balls—a portion of truffle, evanescent and shadowy as mist—(not half so substantial as a good wholesome London November fog, which at times is so thick that it can be easily cut clinging to the knife)—and a glass-thimbleful of maraschino—our friend drove home in his gig through the chill evening air, with his teeth chattering to themselves, and trying to console his importunate gastric juice and empty stomach.

He astonished his wife and household on his return home by eating seriatim everything in the house in the way of flesh, from a haunch of mutton down to a ham bone, and from the new bread down to the stale crust.

Mr. Willis's productions very much resemble Sir Edward's

déjeûner: elegant, tasteful, and unsubstantial, they offer but poor satisfaction to the wholesome appetite of a healthy guest.

Mr. Willis leaves on us the impression that he is not in earnest; that he has no fixed principles, except a fastidious, but very artificial taste. There is a want of healthiness about his mind, which leaves robustness altogether out of the question. The color on the cheeks of his muse is not the rosy freshness of health, but the carmine of the dressing-room; her attitudes are the result of the dancing-master, and not of native grace; there is more of the Aspasia than the Vestal in her manners and discourse, always deducting the wit of the celebrated Grecian beauty. It has always appeared to us that foreign travel, which steadies and consolidates the true poet, has a deteriorating influence on the mere man of elegant susceptibilities. To be sure, every true poet has a *taste*, but it is a natural relish for truth, and not a craving for excitement. The palate of health can derive delight and sustenance from a crust and a draught from the crystal spring, and does not require its appetite to be provoked by the *ragouts* of Paris or the curries of the Indies. In short, the attraction of Mr. Willis's muse proceeds rather from the hectic of consumption and disease, than from the blushing glow and grace of buxom health: its energy is the effect of stimulants, and not the result of symmetrical elasticity and genuine cheerfulness.

To produce an effect by contrast let us create the opposite of the being personified by Collins, and we have the female Frankenstein muse of Mr. Willis.

* * * * * *

"When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call, to Fawn and Dryad known;
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed queen,
Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen
Peeping from forth their alleys green;
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear,
And Sport leaped up, and seized his beechen spear."

We cannot avoid mentioning as a peculiarity in Mr. Willis's writings the singular fact that the majority of his illustrations proceed from articles of female clothing. When we read with the intention of noticing this peculiarity the effect is very comical; first one allusion, then another, until at length a roar of laughter follows the experiment, and convinces us we have proved our point.

There is also at times a most inappropriate use of "adjectives," such as these, "porphyry eyes,"—or likening a lady's bosom to "a shelf of alabaster." Indeed Mr. Willis would be nothing without his adjectives.

Some humorous poet wrote once,

"Without black velvet breeches, what is man?"

A critic might substitute "adjectives" for "velvet smalls," and exclaim in like manner.

It is related of Nollekens, that once when his wife, who was proverbially a passionate woman, was so angry as to stop

in the midst of her vituperation, he cried out during her speechless trance: "If you are short of adjectives, my dear, *swear, it will ease you so!*"

The author of "Rural Letters" never allows his deficiency to carry him into the realms of abjuration, but we sometimes involuntarily think of the sculptor's wife when we read his characteristic productions.

In person, Mr. Willis is tall and elegantly made. His manners are courteous, and he has the polish of high-breeding; his hair is light brown; and altogether he leaves the impression of the English gentleman, refined by travel and observation. He is an elaborate dresser, and is estimable in his private relations.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

As the grave has closed over the poet, we shall give a short biographical sketch of him.

Edgar Poe was the son of David Poe and Elizabeth Arnold. His father was the fourth son of General Poe, a name well known in the Revolutionary War. Some little interest is attached to his memory from the fact of General Lafayette, during his memorable visit to this country, making a pilgrimage to his grave.

Mr. David Poe had three children—Henry, Edgar (the poet), and Rosalie. On the death of their parents Edgar and Rosalie were adopted by a wealthy merchant of the name of Allan. Having no children, Mr. Allan unhesitatingly avowed to all his intention of making Edgar his heir.

In 1816 the subject of this memoir was taken by his adopted parents to England, and after making with them the tour of Scotland, he was left for five years to complete his education at Dr. Bransby's, of Stoke Newington. The curious reader will find a description of this school in one of Poe's sketches called "William Wilson."

Returning to America he went to various academies, and

finally to the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville. The dissolute manners of the Institution infected him, and he was no exception to the general rule. His abilities, notwithstanding, enabled him to maintain a respectable position in the eyes of the Professors. His time here was divided between lectures, debating societies, rambles in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and in making caricatures of his tutors and the heads of the college. We are informed he had the habit of covering the walls of his sleeping-room with these rough charcoal sketches. Rousing himself from this desultory course of life, he took the first honors of the college and returned home.

To escape from the reproaches of his friends, and possibly from the consequences of his thoughtlessness, he formed the design, in conjunction with a friend, of visiting Greece, with the intention of aiding the Revolution then in progress in that classic land. His companion, Ebenezer Burling, abandoned the rash design almost as soon as projected, but the energetic nature of the poet was not so easily turned aside from his path. He proceeded, therefore, as far as St. Petersburg, where he had a narrow escape from the fangs of that brutal government, in consequence of an irregularity in his passport. The exertions of the Consul saved him from the consequences of the error, and through his friendship he returned to America.

Here he found a great change awaiting him. His benefactress, Mrs. Allan, was dead; he reached Richmond the day after her funeral. This was the origin of all his subsequent misfortunes. After an apparent reconciliation with Mr. Allan, he entered West Point Academy, resolved to devote himself to a military life. Here he entered upon his new studies and duties

with characteristic energy, and an honorable career was opened to him; but the Fates willed that Mr. Allan should in his dotage marry a girl young enough to be her husband's granddaughter. The birth of a child convinced Mr. Poe that his hopes to inherit his adopted father's property were at an end, and he consequently left West Point, resolving to proceed to Poland, to join the struggle for liberty then making by that heroic nation against her diabolical oppressors. The fall of Warsaw ended the conflict, and our chivalric poet was again deprived of his intention.

He therefore proceeded to Baltimore, where he learned the death of Mr. Allan. As he had left him nothing, he was now thrown upon the world well nigh resourceless. It is said that this man's widow even refused him his own books.

About this time came the turning point in Mr. Poe's life. Nature had given him a poetical mind; accident now afforded the opportunity for its development.

The Editors of the Baltimore Visitor had offered a premium for the best prose tale, and also one for the best poem. The umpires were men of taste and ability, and, after a careful consideration of the productions, they decided that Mr. Poe was undoubtedly entitled to both prizes. As Mr. Poe was entirely unknown to them, this was a genuine tribute to his superior merit.

The poem he sent was the "Coliseum," and six tales for their selection. Not content with awarding the premiums, they declared that the worst of the six tales referred to was better than the best of the other competitors.

Some little time after this triumph he was engaged by Mr.

White to edit the "Southern Literary Messenger," which had been established about seven months, and had attained a circulation of about four hundred subscribers.

There he remained for nearly two years, devoting the energies of his rich and ingenious mind to the interest of the Review; so much was he regarded there that when he left he had raised the circulation of the journal to above three thousand.

Very much of this success was owing to the fearlessness of his criticisms. Always in earnest, he was either on one side or the other; he had a scorn of the respectable level trash which has too long brooded like a nightmare over American Literature. Mr. Poe did not like tamely to submit to the dethronement of genius, and the instalment of a feeble, sickly grace, and an amiable mediocrity. What gods and men abhor, according to Horace, a certain class of critics and readers in America adore. America is jealous of her victories by sea and land—is proud of advantages with which she has nothing to do, such as Niagara, the Mississippi, and the other wonders of nature. An American points with pride to the magnificent steamboats which ride the waters like things of life. Foreigners sometimes smile at the honest satisfaction, even enthusiasm, which lights up the national face when a few hundred troops file down Broadway, to discordant drums and squeaking fifes. But all their natural feeling and national pride stop here. So far from the American public taking any interest in their own men of genius—in the triumphs of mind—they absolutely allow others openly to conspire, and put down every attempt to establish a National Literature.

The Americans are a shrewd and far-seeing people, but they

are somewhat too material; they must not believe that a nation can long exist without men of thought, as well as men of action. The salvation of America lies in the possession of a Republican Literature. The literature of England is slowly sapping the foundation of her institutions. England does all her thinking, and if this system continues, the action of this great nation will be in accordance with the will of the old country. Like the Gulf Stream of Florida, the current of aristocratical genius is slowly drifting the ark of America to a point they little dream of, and never intend. The very bulk of this country renders the operation unseen; but, though imperceptible to the eye, it is palpable to the mind, and certain in its results.

What hope of victory would the armies and navies of this young republic have had, if, when they were arming for the fight, the bystanders had discouraged them; or when sailing to the encounter, the jibes or indifference of their fellow-citizens had been expressed? Certain defeat and disgrace, as sure as heaven! And how can America expect her young authors to vindicate her national glory when she treats them with indifference and neglect. Nay, even worse, she openly discourages them in their attempt, and tacitly confesses that it is hopeless to compete with the writers of England or France. These remarks apply to every branch of American literature; let the people consider this matter, and remedy it before they find the republican form governed by a foreign and aristocratical mind. If luxury enervated the Roman Body, so will a foreign pabulum destroy the American Mind.

It is a curious fact that the worst enemies of the national mind have been a few of her own sons. These are authors who till

lately have entirely enjoyed the monopoly of the English market; now they will be obliged to join the body of native authors, and hurry to the rescue. So long as they could trespass on the mistaken courtesy of the British publishers, and get four thousand guineas for this Life of Columbus, and two hundred guineas for that Typee, there was no occasion for any interference; in fact, they were materially benefited by this crying injustice to the great body of authors. Now their own rights are in jeopardy, and they must join the ranks of International Copyright.

We cannot help here remarking that if we were an American author, we should compel certain writers to account for their past apathy and their present activity; as, however, we wish to close these remarks with good-humor, we shall quote a little anecdote which has gone the round of society in England. It also evidences that Janus-faced figure which every fact and fiction possesses for the human thought.

Owing to some accident there are two portraits of an author in Mr. Murray's private office, in Albemarle street. A friend inquiring of him one day the cause of this superabundant reverence for the great writer, received for reply: "Really, I cannot account for it on any other ground than the fact that I have lost twice as much by that author as by any other."

Although somewhat irrelevant the mention of Mr. Murray's name reminds us of a joke played off by Byron upon that prince of publishers. Mr. Leigh Hunt was our informant.

The "moody Childe" had given to Murray as a birthday present a Bible magnificently bound, and which he enriched

by a very flattering inscription. This was laid by the grateful publisher on his drawing-room table, and somewhat ostentatiously displayed to all comers. One evening, as a large company were gathered around the table, one of the guests happened to open the Testament, and saw some writing in the margin. Calling to Murray, he said: "Why, Byron has written something here!" Narrower inspection proved that the profane wit had erased the word "*robber*" in the text and substituted that of "publisher," so that the passage read thus: "Now, Barabbas was a publisher!" The legend goes on to state that the book disappeared that very night from the drawing-room table.

After this digression we must return to our poet's fortunes.

Mr. Poe abandoned the "Southern Literary Messenger" to assist Professors Anthon, Henry, and Hawks in the conducting of the "New York Quarterly Review." Here he came down pretty freely with his critical axe, and made many enemies. At the end of a year he went to Philadelphia, and amused himself by writing for the "Gentleman's Magazine," since merged into Graham's. His criticisms here, as usual, occasioned much discussion.

Mr. Poe's first volume of poems was a modest pamphlet, called "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems, by a Virginian." It was published at Boston, in his fifteenth year. The following lines were written two years previous; they exhibit great promise for a boy of thirteen.

"TO HELEN.

"Helen, thy beauty is to me,
Like those Nicean barks of yore,

That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore,
To his own native shore.

"On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy naiad airs have brought me home,
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.

"Lo! in yon brilliant window niche,
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land."

There is a confused and misty classic reminiscence about these lines which shows the poetical mind in its first dreamy efforts to realize.

A second edition of this volume was published in Baltimore in 1827; and a third, we are informed, during the author's cadetship at West Point.

We are much struck with a poem entitled "Ligrea." It is intended as a personification of music. It is too long to quote entire; we must, however, find space for a few stanzas. For a boy of fourteen it is certainly a singular production, and evidences a psychological development painfully precocious, and indicative of future sorrow.

There is a peculiarity of rhythm in all Mr. Poe's verses

which is attractive, although occasionally exhibiting too much of their mechanical nature.

This is the "Spirit's Invocation."

"Spirit, that dwellest where
In the deep sky
The terrible and fair
In beauty vie.
Beyond the line of blue,
The boundary of the star,
That turneth at the view
Of thy barrier and thy bar.

* * *

Bright beings that ponder
With half-closing eyes,
On the stars which grave wonder
Hath drawn from the skies.

* * *

Up! shake from your wings
All hindering things,
The dew of the night
Will weigh down your flight,
And true-love caresses—
Oh! leave them apart,
They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

* * *

The sound of the rain,
That leaps down to the flower,
And dances again
In the rhythm of the shower.

The murmur that springs
From the growing of grass,
Are the music of things,
But are modelled—alas!"

* * *

It is evident to all that the melody of the young poet was here, and only required study and opportunity to come out in glorious and enduring shapes.

In the ensuing extract we have a singular phase of the youthful mind—dreamy, confused; yet in this misty vision we see a world of order forming. It is evidently inspired by some of Keats.

"Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
Silence, which is the veriest word of all.
Here nature speaks, and evil ideal things
Flap shadowy hands for visionary wings.
A dome, by linked light from heaven let down,
Sat gently on these columns as a crown,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain,
And hallowed all the beauty twice again,
Save when between the empyrean and that ring
Some eager spirit flapped his dusky wing.
Within the centre of this hall to breathe
She paused, and panted Zanthe! all beneath
The brilliant light that kissed her golden hair,
And long to rest, yet could not sparkle there.
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheek was flushing, and her lips apart,
And zone, that clung about her gentle waist,
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart."

When critical readers object to the laborious combination of images here, let it be remembered this was the composition of a boy. This, however, if carried out strictly, becomes a very serious drawback upon our estimate of Mr. Poe's genius, for we do not find, as a poet, he made much progress from fourteen to forty. His prose grew firmer, more thoughtful, fuller of artistic effects every year he wrote, as his numerous tales unmistakably testify; but his verses seemed modelled on his earliest school. Of all poets he seems earliest to have caught the trick of verse. His schoolboy effusions possess the glow of his more matured efforts; and with the exception of two or three productions, where the ingenuity of the mechanical construction shows the man's thought, there is nothing to demarcate one poem from another.

That development of progressive power so naturally visible in all the productions of a great mind is not traceable in our author's verse, but, with a singular psychological contradiction, is evident throughout his other writings.

In this short extract we may observe much of the after man.

"Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light,
She fears to perfume, perfuming the night:
And that aspiring flower that sprang on earth,
And died ere scarce exalted into birth,
Bursting its odorous heart in spirit, to wing
Its way to heaven from garden of a king.
And Valisnerian Lotus thither flown,
From struggling with the waters of the Rhone,
And thy most lovely purple perfume Zante,
Isola d' oro—fior de Levante,

And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever,
With Indian Cupid down the Holy River."

This description of poetry is, of all others, the most difficult to judge from. It possesses so many features of the composite order that we know not how much belongs to the memory or the imagination. Still there is a flow of music throughout which convinces the most sceptical of the presence of poetic susceptibilities and power of sound.

In his sonnet to Science we have a clearer insight into our author's mode of dealing with thought in an emphatic manner:

"Science, true daughter of Old Time thou art:
Who alterest all things with thy piercing eyes,
Why prey'st thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise
Who would'st not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car,
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood,
To seek a shelter in some happier state?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?"

This is certainly a fine sonnet, and contains an agreeable mixture of classical reminiscence and personal romance.

Without in any way meaning to convey to the reader the

idea of imitation, we cannot help quoting, as an agreeable companion to the above, Wordsworth's sonnet embodying similar regrets. It is justly considered one of the old English Bard's most finished efforts.

"The world is too much with us; late or soon,
Getting or spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We've changed our hearts away—a sordid boon.
Yon sea that bares its bosom to the moon—
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
But are upgathered now like sleeping flowers.
For this—for all things we are out of tune,
They move us not: great God I'd rather be
A pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
"So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.
Have sight of Venus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

Of all the masters of versification Mr. Coleridge was certainly the one who made it a great feature in his poetry; but his system was so refined, so subtilized, as to escape the notice of the outward senses; its presence was felt within by reason of the effect produced on the mind by his charmed verses. His witchcraft was invisible; the spell was a pervading power. In Mr. Poe, who in some respects may be called a mechanical or machine Coleridge, we have more of the old conjurer's tricks. There is a needless display of cabalistic symbols; an officious

devil draws ostentatious circles, and other mathematical deviltry, so that we surrender to the *show*, and not to the *soul* of magic power; it is really not too much to say that a fine algebraist might get a tolerably correct idea of some of the most characteristic of Mr. Poe's verses by an architectural skeleton or design of his poems. The physique of melody is generally fatal to its spirituality; but, owing to a curious faculty in our author, he marvellously escapes detection, except from a few of the more over wise and over curious critics. To many, we feel sure this is his great charm; it requires a very nice and a very close analysis to discover the source of his success with the many.

That the author of the "Raven," &c., was a poet no doubt can exist. Extravagant as our opinion may now appear, we venture to say that in a few years, when the memory of his failings shall have died away, he will be considered one of America's best poets. He was the first who arrested our attention, and conveyed to our mind the fact that a man of great peculiarity was speaking. We use peculiarity out of a sort of insecurity and hesitation we do not often feel, otherwise we have a full and strong inclination to write originality. Had we been in England we should unhesitatingly have done so; but as Mr. Poe is only an American, we forbear to move a second time the indignation of the Press by claiming for a native of this great republic a common share of God's great gift of intellect. The day will, however, come when all the objections of a foreign Press will not prevent justice being done to the native genius of the land of Washington.

One grand distinguishing feature in Mr. Poe's mind is his mathematical power. He even constructs his poetry on its basis: in his prose writings he carries this occasionally to a wearisome extent: it is also visible in the mechanical form of his verse. In his later productions it is very strong; we more particularly allude to the most celebrated of his poems, viz. "The Raven;" this is too well known to quote entire, we shall therefore content ourselves by giving only a few stanzas, in order to illustrate our position and confirm our assertion.

We cannot dismiss this subject without paying our earnest tribute to the womanhood of the poet's chief friend, his wife's mother. To Mrs. Clem will be awarded in the history of genius the rarest of all crowns, the wreath placed by God's hands—through his noblest creatures—on woman's beautiful and matron brow. Even in her lifetime she will receive the world's acknowledgment of her nobility of soul; and the tongues whom envy or shame froze in the life of her gifted but unhappy son-in-law, will thaw, and like the fable of old utter praises to the perished one, condemning their own wretched selves.

Oh! that a hand would arise, who, carefully registering the arts of these wretched shams of humanity—these suits of dress with a patent digester placed inside—would whip them naked through the world; when—after persecuting the prophets, and guarding the clothes of the murderers—they, terrified into a mongrel and disgusting recognition of genius, audaciously join in the procession, as though they were the genuine mourners of the martyred man.

We will not dwell long on the darkness of our poet's fate: his errors were many and grievous. We all know how greedily the dull and the malignant catch at any straws to save them from perishing in their own self-contempt, for it is given to every man to feel his own low nature as compared with the lords of mind.

We have been told by those who knew Mr. Poe well, that so weakly strung were all his nerves, that the smallest modicum of stimulant had an alarming effect upon him, and produced actions scarcely resolvable by sanity. It may be said that it is not the quantity of stimulant, but the effect produced, which constitutes the drunkard, and that Mr. Poe was as much to blame for the inebriation of a glass as of a bottle; but we would tell these cold-blooded fishes—for they are not men—that it is not given to the common-place men either to feel the raptures of poetical inspiration, or the despondency of prostrated energies. The masses are wisely, as Pope says,

"Content to dwell in decencies for ever."

There is a homely verse in an old ballad which was made upon Shakspeare's masterpiece of human philosophy:

"Hamlet loved a maid;
Calumny had passed her:
She never had played tricks—
Because nobody had asked her."

This rough and unconditional doggrel gives a graphic

insight into the proprieties of the masses: they have neither had the impulse nor the opportunity to be indiscreet. Let our readers clearly understand we are not the apologists of Mr. Poe's errors—as Mark Antony says,

"We come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him;"

but, at the same time, we will not allow any undue deference to the opinion of the world.

We are glad to be confirmed in this by the testimony of the Editor of the Home Journal, a gentleman not only distinguished for his sympathy with men of genius, but also for the respect he pays the proprieties of life.

We quote the following manly tribute to his "dead brother in verse:"

"Some four or five years since, when editing a daily paper in this city, Mr. Poe was employed by us for several months as critic and sub-editor. This was our first personal acquaintance with him. He resided with his wife and mother, at Fordham, a few miles out of town, but was at his desk in the office from nine in the morning till the evening paper went to press. With the highest admiration for his genius, and a willingness to let it atone for more than ordinary irregularity, we were led by common report to expect a very capricious attention to his duties, and occasionally a scene of violence and difficulty. Time went on, however, and he was invariably punctual and industrious. * * * With a prospect of taking the lead in another periodical, he at last voluntarily gave up his employment with us, and through all this considerable period, we had seen but one presentment of the man—a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling, by his unvarying deportment and ability.

"Residing as he did in the country, we never met Mr. Poe in hours of leisure; but he frequently called on us afterwards at our place of business, and we met him often in the street—invariably the same sad-mannered, winning, and refined gentleman, such as we had always known him. It was by rumor only, up to the day of his death, that we knew of any other development of manner or character. We heard, from one who knew him well (what should be stated in all mention of his lamentable irregularities) that, with a *single glass* of wine his whole nature was reversed, the demon became uppermost, and, though none of the usual signs of intoxication were visible, his *will* was palpably insane. Possessing his reasoning faculties in excited activity, at such times, and seeking his acquaintances with his wonted look and memory, he easily seemed personating only another phase of his natural character, and was accused, accordingly, of insulting arrogance and bad-heartedness. * * * The arrogance, vanity, and depravity of heart of which Mr. Poe was generally accused, seem to us referable altogether to this reversed phase of his character. Under that degree of intoxication which only acted upon him by demonizing his sense of truth and right, he doubtless said and did much that was wholly irreconcilable with his better nature; but, when himself, and as we knew him only, his modesty and unaffected humility as to his own deservings were a constant charm to his character."

The peculiar cadence of the poet's soul—somewhat, perhaps, too artificially forced upon the attention, is well developed in the little poem of Annabel Lee. It is evidently an echo of "Christabel," but it is a very beautiful one, and charms the ear, if it does not strike the mind as an original. There is a haunting sense of beauty about the metrical arrangement of Poe's

verses which is always evidence of a finely strung nervous system.

ANNABEL LEE.

"It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

"*I* was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea.
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

"And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her high-born kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea."

The next line is a striking proof of that mixture of puerility and beauty, which, like the conflict of his own discordant

nature, renders his writings as well as himself a problem to his fellow men.

There is great force and beauty in

"The wind came out of the cloud by night,"

and yet how immediately he spoils the effect for the sake of the jingle of "chilling and killing—"

"The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

"But our love, it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who are older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

"For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the sounding sea."

Well known as the "Raven" is, we should leave the poetical idea of him incomplete without illustrating our remarks by a quotation. We have printed the stanzas differently in shape to the method he has followed, but the words are of course unaltered.

"Once upon a midnight dreary,
While I pondered weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious
Volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping,
Suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping,
Rapping at my chamber door.
'Tis some visitor,' I muttered,
'Tapping at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more.'"

The next stanza closes with one of the finest touches of poetical imagery and pathos.

"For the rare and radiant maiden
Whom the angels name Lenore."

As Coleridge says, "beautiful exceedingly."

The mechanical structure of the verse is very apparent when read with attention to the pauses. Nevertheless, it is a poem which will always give pleasure to the reader, even though it be read for the hundredth time; for, notwithstanding the marked arith-

metic of the shape, it is one of those few productions which bear repetition without palling.

"Deep into that darkness peering,
Long I stood there, wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal
Ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken,
And the darkness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken
Was the whispered word 'Lenore!'
This I whispered, and an echo
Murmured back the word 'Lenore!'
Merely this, and nothing more.

"Back into the chamber turning,
All my soul within me burning,
Soon I heard again a tapping
Somewhat louder than before.
'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is
Something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is,
And this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment
And this mystery explore;—
'Tis the wind and nothing more!'

"Open here I flung the shutter,
When, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven
Of the saintly days of yore;

Not the least obeisance made he;
Not an instant stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady,
Perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas
Just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more."

The last stanza is very felicitous.

How visibly the poet's intention to produce effect by the outer shape of verse is here made apparent:

"Then this ebony bird beguiling
My sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum
Of the countenance it wore,
'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven,
Thou,' I said, 'art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient raven
Wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is
On the Night's Plutonian shore!'
Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'"

"Then, methought, the air grew denser,
Perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by angels whose faint foot-falls
Tinkled on the tufted floor.
'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent thee,
By these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe

From thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe
And forget this lost Lenore!'
Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'"

"'Be that word our sign of parting,
Bird or fiend!' I shrieked, upstarting—
Get thee back into the tempest
And the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token
Of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!
Quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and
Take thy form from off my door!'
Quoth the raven 'Nevermore.'

"And the raven, never flitting,
Still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas
Just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming
Of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming,
Throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow
That lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!"

Although his mechanical art is too visible, we cannot withhold our praise for the success of the attempt. Coleridge was a

great master of the musical chords of verse, but he superadded a charm which spiritualized the vehicle of his thought.

In Mr. Poe we miss this power, and consequently we feel at times inclined to consider the whole affair as machine poetry, so far as the outer shape is concerned. But here Mr. Poe has not done himself justice; he has wilfully made his mechanical artifice so prominent, as to intercept the effect of his own poetical spirit. He has encumbered it with a needless ornament, which resembles a scaffolding so interwoven with the structure, as to persuade the beholder it is essential for the very support of the building.

We need hardly point out the injurious effect this has had upon Mr. Poe's reputation as a man of genius, for such he undoubtedly was.

Nor was his power confined to poetry alone. As a prose writer he was one of the most peculiar of his age; his stories have a circumstantiality about them perfectly marvellous; they seem bewilderingly true; the most astounding contradictions are accounted for, and a combination of improbabilities seems to meet as matter of course. This of necessity implies a genius, in our estimate of the word, although many acute writers merely term it ingenious. We would say above all other writers of American prose and verse, Mr. Poe is undoubtedly the most peculiar. Now that the grave has made him famous in the eyes of the world, he will have a school of imitators, and this will no doubt be accepted as a sure proof of a certain originality. From first to last there is the peculiar stamp of the man on everything he did: it is his own genuine coin, with his well-known effigy upon it. We must, however,

state that we think his circumstantiality becomes tedious, and that his over-anxiety to make every improbability fit into another improbability, so as to form a consecutive chain out of inconsistencies, throws very often a doubt over the whole story, and defeats his own object. We cannot illustrate this better than by relating a little anecdote we heard in our boyhood.

A certain Gascon nobleman, famous for his enormous fables, which he always swore were true, had a sycophant, who, whenever his patron's guests seemed staggering into unbelief by some outrageous Munchausen, was appealed to as a kind of witness to testify and confirm the truth of the story in question.

At an entertainment one day, the Gascon lord was peculiarly sublime in his marvels and his boastings, and encouraged by his guests' capacious swallow, he ventured to affirm that he had a herring pond in his park. As this was well known to be a salt-water fish, a general doubt of the fact was expressed. The somewhat offended owner of the pond in question appealed to his convenient friend, as to the truth of the statement. He readily and boldly confirmed it in the following manner:

"I can assure you, gentlemen, that what my lord says is true. He has a pond in his garden full of herrings! Ah! and *red* herrings too."

This over-proving a case by capping it with a notorious impossibility is the besetting sin of Mr. Poe's writings, more especially of his prose works. Nevertheless they are so mar-

vellously well done, that we are inclined to think in a few years he will chiefly be remembered for his tales, and that his poetical works will dwindle into a small compass composed of half-a-dozen favorite poems.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

It is somewhat unfortunate for Mr. Longfellow that he has thrown by far the greatest part of his poetical treasure into the most thankless of all forms, the hexameter. A long acquaintance justifies us in the assertion, that there are few American poems where so much fine thought and tender feeling are hid as in "Evangeline." The story is simple, yet touching; and the theme is the fidelity and endurance of betrothed love. Two lovers were separated on the eve of their marriage to be reunited in old age at the deathbed of the intended bridegroom. We are told by the historian, that such were the harshness and haste of the British government when it expelled the neutral French population from Acadia, that many families were suddenly scattered east and west never to meet again.

In "Evangeline" we have a couple thus torn apart, spending their lives in a fruitless search for each other, with the wasting fire of hope deferred wearing their hearts away. The opening sketch of the tranquil lives of the French Acadians, on the Gulf of Minas, is truly idyllic; but the peculiarity of the mea-

sure—to which the English language is so little adapted—renders it very difficult to do justice in it even to the finest poetry. The hexameter is the grave of poetry. It is the crowning monotony of writing. A sort of stale prose. An author like Mr. Longfellow should not deprive himself of so much fame, by pushing to the utmost a peculiarity by which he had attained, in so many quarters, a somewhat undeserved reputation. Imitation has been charged on all poets, and we know that the indignation of Robert Green was so soured by the appropriations of Shakspeare, that he denounced him "as a jay strutting about in our feathers, and fancying himself as the only *Shakscene* of the country." This charge is always more or less true of a young author, and it is in the very nature of things: it arises from the very susceptibility of his system. The Beautiful is his idol; his commonest thought is an anthem to her praise; and, like a true disciple, he insensibly adopts the manner of the priest he has confessed to, till he himself becomes one of the elect. A curious volume of psychological biography is opened to our study if we trace the young poet to his progenitor. Life itself is an imitation: we are all copies of each other: the shades of difference are minute; and as in a herd of buffaloes one is scarcely distinguishable from another, yet each is as distinct in its own individuality as though one were an animalcule and the other a mastodon. The laws of the intellectual being are as recognisable as those of the physical, and we never yet heard the right of a separate existence denied to Julius Cæsar, Wellington, or Washington, on account of their having had a parent. On the same ground we claim individuality for

poets, in despite of their having founded their nature on the inspiration of another. The real difference lies in the degree of imitation. The true poet absorbs, the versifier imitates. Every poet commences with more or less of some predominant mind, the most assimilant to his own.

Into "Evangeline" Mr. Longfellow has thrown more of his own individual poetry than into any other production, and we shall endeavor to elicit from it the most striking traits of his mind.

The opening is simple, and full of fine clear description.

"In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labor incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides: but at stated seasons the flood-gates
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the meadows.
West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the northward
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains
Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty Atlantic
Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station descended.
There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian village.
Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and chestnut,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of the Henries.

The closing line is an instance of that want of keeping which occasionally spoils the effect of a fine picture; it carries the reader away from the American scene to the feudal times.

The heroine, Evangeline, is thus introduced; not very happily, we think:

"Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by the way-side,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of her tresses!
Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noon-tide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the ear, as the priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and the ear-rings,
Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child, through long generations."

The maiden is loved and sought by all the lads in the village, but the favored one is Gabriel Lajeunesse. They had been educated together, and they had grown up as brother and sister. Her father, the old farmer, is thus graphically described in a few lines:

"Stalworth and stately in form was the man of seventy winters;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snow-flakes;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves."

Nor is the picture of Gabriel's sire unworthy to be placed by its side:

"Thus as they sat, were footsteps heard, and, suddenly lifted,
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung back on its hinges.
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was Basil the blacksmith,
And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who was with him.
'Welcome!' the farmer exclaimed, as their footsteps paused on the threshold,
'Welcome, Basil my friend! Come, take thy place on the settle
Close by the chimney-side, which is always empty without thee;
Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the box of tobacco;
Never so much thyself art thou as when through the curling
Smoke of the pipe, or the forge, thy friendly and jovial face gleams
Round and red as the harvest moon through the mist of the marshes.'
Then, with a smile of content, thus answered Basil the blacksmith,
Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the fireside."

The blacksmith comes to announce the arrival of a fleet from England with hostile intentions.

The incredulity of the old farmer is admirably described.

"Then with a pleasant smile made answer the jovial farmer:

'Safer we are unarmed, in the midst of our flocks and our corn-
fields,
Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged by the ocean,
Than were our fathers in forts, besieged by the enemy's cannon.
Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may no shadow of sorrow
Fall on this house and hearth; for this is the night of the contract.
Built are the house and the barn. The merry lads of the village
Strongly have built them and well; and, breaking the glebe round
about them,
Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food for a twelve-
month.
René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers and inkhorn.
Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy of our children?'
As apart by the window she stood, with her hand in her lover's,
Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her father had spoken,
And as they died on his lips the worthy notary entered."

The decision of the English Government is that the inhabitants of this happy village shall be scattered. Mr. Longfellow paints with great force, beauty, and tenderness, the departure of the villagers.

"Four times the sun had risen and set; and now on the fifth day
Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids of the farm-house.
Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful procession,
Came from the neighboring hamlets and farms the Acadian women,
Driving in ponderous wains their household goods to the sea-shore,
Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their dwellings,
Ere they were shut from sight by the winding road and the wood-
land.
Close at their sides their children ran, and urged on the oxen,
Clasping still in their little hands some fragments of playthings."

There is a simplicity about many of the descriptions in Evangeline which is very seldom apparent in his other poems. Our readers will, of course, remember how well the English hexameter sounds for a dozen lines or so, but a poem in that measure is insufferably tedious.

The lovers are separated, and the end of the first part closes with the following beautiful lines:

"Lo! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast congregation,
Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the dirges.
'T was the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the ocean,
With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying land-
ward.
Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of embarking;
And, with the ebb of that tide, the ships sailed out of the harbor,
Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and the village in
ruins."

The second part does not seem to be equal to the first. Still it has pieces of painting worthy of any poet, and every fine image makes us regret the injudicious metre it is written in. The wanderings and patient enduring of Evangeline are told with great pathos. Finally, after many sore heart-wastings she meets her lover, but it is in old age, and on his death-bed.

This scene is thus described:—

"Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of wonder,
Still she stood, with her colorless lips apart, while a shudder
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flowerets dropped from
her fingers,

And, from her eyes and cheeks, the light and bloom of the
morning.
Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible anguish,
That the dying heard it, and started up from their pillows.
On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an old man.
Long, and thin, and grey were the locks that shaded his temples;
But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a moment
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier manhood;
So are wont to be changed the faces of those who are dying.
Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled its portals,
That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and pass over,
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit exhausted
Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths in the darkness,
Darkness of slumber and death, for ever sinking and sinking.
Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied reverberations,
Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush that succeeded,
Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and saint-like,
'Gabriel! O my beloved!' and died away in silence."

The concluding scene of this tale of Faithful Love is exquisitely done. It is a perfect gem!

"Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home of his childhood;
Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers among them,
Viilage, and mountain, and woodlands; and, walking under their
shadow,
As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in his vision.
Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he lifted his eyelids,
Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt by his bedside.
Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the accents unuttered

Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what his tongue would
have spoken.
Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline, kneeling beside him,
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her bosom.
Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it suddenly sank into
darkness,
As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind at a casement."

Thus ends the most elaborated of Mr. Longfellow's poems, and it is one, perhaps, on which he most prides himself. We do not set the high estimate on it which many of his admirers do, but we think we have quoted enough to convince the reader that it is full of poetical thought and feeling. We cannot help thinking that the author has missed a great success by embodying this conception in hexameters.

The next production on which Mr. Longfellow has lavished his greatest care is the play entitled "The Spanish Student." As a dramatist he has signally failed. He lacks nerve and condensation. The story is very prettily told by the actors, but beyond the dialogue form it has no pretensions to be called a Drama. You are informed, but not roused. The progress is pleasant, the speeches are elegant, and there is an external of velvet thrown over the form which is fatal to its interest, individuality, and vigor. The actors are masks, and not men. It is a refined conversation, and not a human group working to an intelligible end, moved by their own foibles and pursuits, but determined by some master passion in the superior mind of the one man, round whom the others revolve, by the force of a psychological gravitation, as unerring as that natural law by

which moons spin round planets, planets round suns, and suns in due degrees round the eternal centre. Every fine play is reducible to a passion, which is a centre or circle; for different as these two definitions may appear at first glance in mathematics, yet in metaphysics they are one and the same thing, or rather, we ought to say, one includes the other. They are indissolubly connected; the centre is the soul of the circle, and the circle is the body of the centre.

If we take Othello, we shall find jealousy the controlling power; in Hamlet, indecision; Macbeth, superstition—not ambition, as commonly supposed, for this is developed in Richard the Third; in Lear, the great idea is *not* ingratitude, but a prudential reserve of rights and a warning against dotage. This is the test of a great dramatist. The soul of a drama is its controlling passion; its body is the plot; the actors are the faculties; its life is the progress; and the catastrophe is the death. Judged by this rule, we need scarcely observe that Longfellow has no pretension to be considered a dramatist.

In the very first scene there is an incident so absurd as almost to stamp upon the very first page—this is no play.

The scene turns upon the purity of a danseuse, one Preciosa, the heroine of a play: she is a gipsy.

"LARA.

"Then I must try some other way to win her!
Pray, dost thou know Victorian?

"FRANCISCO.

"Yes, my Lord;
I saw him at the jeweller's to-day.

"LARA.

"What was he doing there?

"FRANCISCO.

"I saw him buy
A golden ring, that had a ruby in it.

"LARA.

"Was there another like it?

"FRANCISCO.

"One so like it
I could not choose between them.

"LARA.

"It is well.
To-morrow morning bring that ring to me.
Do not forget. Now light me to my bed.
[*Exeunt.*"

A man of dramatic genius would never so palpably make a giant merely to kill him, nor would he invent a jeweller on purpose to have two rings exactly alike. There is too much of the make-believe, as children term it, to throw an air of nature over the scene.

In the second scene there is an attempt at humor, but of a very dismal kind. Chispa says, among other witticisms,

"And now, gentlemen," (*addressing the serenaders,*) "*pax vobiscum*, as the ass said to the cabbages." . . . .

"Now look you, you are gentlemen who lead the life of crickets. You enjoy hunger by day, and noise by night!"

We are introduced to the heroine in the third scene. Were she only a dancer, or singer, or actress, we might possibly accept her opening words as a key-note to her character; but she is meant to be *any* thing but either of those characters, and the reader will judge how undramatic are the introductory tokens of her dramatic existence. They are, singularly enough, a complete contradiction to her character. We do not analyse this play thoroughly on its own account, for that would hardly be fair, seeing that Mr. Longfellow does not assume to be a dramatist, but chiefly to develope our theory of a drama.

"PRECIOSA.

"How slowly through the lilac-scented air
Descends the tranquil moon; like thistle down
The vapory clouds float in the peaceful sky:
And sweetly from yon hollow vaults of shade
The nightingales breathe out their souls in song.
And hark! what songs of love, what soul-like sounds,
Answer them from below!"

Then follows a very fine scene between the dancer and her lover Victorian. We quote part of the lover's speech.

"VICTORIAN.

"What I most prize in woman
Is her affection, not her intellect.
The intellect is finite, but the affections

Are infinite, and cannot be exhausted.
Compare me with the great men of the earth:
What am I? Why, a pigmy among giants!
But if thou lovest?—Mark me—I say, lovest!
The greatest of thy sex excels thee not!
The world of affection is thy world,
Not that of man's ambition! In that stillness
That most becomes a woman, calm and holy,
Thou sittest by the fireside of the heart
Feeding its flame."

In the fourth scene, Crispa, the comic gentleman, again appears, but with the exception of devouring a supper, he does nothing very laughable. We generally notice that the finest fun at Niblo's comes off when Francis Ravel is eating his own or somebody else's supper. By way of critical objection, we may say that the drama does not take one single step forward in this scene.

In the next scene between the gipsy girl's lover Victorian and an intimate, we have very pleasant writing, but there is no action; as the sailors say, "all are at anchor." Victorian's praise of Preciosa is well said:

"The angels sang in heaven when she was born!
She is a precious jewel I have found
Among the filth and rubbish of the world.
I'll stoop for it; but when I wear it here,
Set on my forehead like the morning star,
The world may wonder, but it will not laugh!"

This scene is full to overflowing with the most excellent

writing. We wish the author of "Jacob Leisler" would study this drama; we feel sure he would learn something that would vastly improve his writings.

There is a skill in the grouping of the following thought which almost makes it seem original, although it is merely versified from a thought of Carlyle:

"HYPOLITO.

"Hast thou e'er reflected
How much lies hidden in that one word, *now*?

"VICTORIAN.

"Yes; all the awful mystery of Life!
I oft have thought, my dear Hypolito,
That could we, by some spell of magic, change
The world and its inhabitants to stone,
In the same attitudes they now are in,
What fearful glances downward might we cast
Into the hollow chasms of human life!
What groups should we behold about the deathbed,
Putting to shame the group of Niobe!
What joyful welcomes, and what sad farewells!
What stony tears in those congealed eyes!
What visible joy or anguish in those cheeks!
What bridal pomps, and what funereal shows!
What foes, like gladiators, fierce and struggling!
What lovers with their marble lips together!"

We have been told that the following lines are not original. As we were not informed from whom they were taken, we shall treat

the unknown author as a Mrs. Harris, and shall therefore consider Mr. Longfellow as their lawful owner.

"Hark! how the loud and ponderous mace of time
Knocks at the golden portals of the day."

This scene closes the first act. With the exception of an introduction to some of the actors there is no progress. We do not certainly expect much done at the beginning of a play, but we cannot conceive a dramatist writing five scenes, and remaining stationary all the time. The second act commences with a scene which, like the whole play, is well written, but the introduction of the Gipsy's father is unartistic, and immediately following the bestowal of the purse to another, shows too fully the artificial nature of the incident; but the succeeding case is too gross a departure from the truth of nature to be tolerated in a drama. As a satire it is admissible, but the probabilities are too grossly violated by making an archbishop and a cardinal, out of admiration for a dancer, join in the Cachuca, throw up their caps in the air, and finish the scene by applauding vehemently.

We may remark here, by the way, that, with scarcely an exception, this play is entirely composed of dialogues. The second act closes with a little bustle which puzzles the audience —a sort of Comedy of Errors, without the occasion.

The last act is full of elegant writing. Victorian says :—

"Yes, Love is ever busy with his shuttle,
Is ever weaving into life's dull warp;
Bright, gorgeous flowers, and scenes Arcadian,

Hanging our gloomy prison house about
With tapestries, which make its walls dilate
In never ending visions of delight."

The following metaphor is well conceived and finely executed. Unable to forget his lady-love the Student says:

"Yet, good Hypolito, it is in vain
I throw into oblivion's sea the sword
That pierces me: for like Excalibar,
With gemmed and flashing hilt, it will not sink.
There rises from below a hand that grasps it,
And waves it in the air, *and* wailing voices
Are heard along the shore."

We think the repetition of the word *and* is a slight defect, but every lover of poetry will admire it; it has been, however, evidently suggested by Tennyson's fragment entitled "Morte d'Arthur."

This scene has only one fault, that it is perfectly in the way of the action. As a piece of poetical writing it is as fine as any dramatic scene in Barry Cornwall. Indeed, like the English poet, Mr. Longfellow lacks the nerve and sustained power to form a play, but in single scenes he is very happy. There are a propriety and polish about his sentiments which charm the fastidious critic, but fail in rousing the attention of the many.

As a specimen of elegant composition we present the close of the scene already referred to.

"HYPOLITO.

* * * * *

"Thou art too young, too full of lusty health,
To talk of dying.

"VICTORIAN.

"Yet I fain would die!
To go through life, unloving and unloved;
To feel that thirst and hunger of the soul
We cannot still; that longing, that wild impulse,
And struggle after something we have not
And cannot have; the effort to be strong;
And, like the Spartan boy, to smile, and smile,
While secret wounds do bleed beneath our cloaks;
All this the dead feel not,—the dead alone!
Would I were with them!

"HYPOLITO.

"We shall all be soon.

"VICTORIAN.

"It cannot be too soon; for I am weary
Of the bewildering masquerade of Life,
Where strangers walk as friends, and friends as strangers;
Where whispers overheard betray false hearts;
And through the mazes of the crowd we chase
Some form of loveliness, that smiles, and beckons,
And cheats us with fair words, only to leave us
A mockery and a jest; maddened,—confused,—
Not knowing friend from foe.

" HYPOLITO.

" Why seek to know?
Enjoy the merry shrovetide of thy youth!
Take each fair mask for what it gives itself,
Nor strive to look beneath it.

" VICTORIAN.

" I confess,
That were the wiser part. But Hope no longer
Comforts my soul. I am a wretched man,
Much like a poor and shipwrecked mariner,
Who, struggling to climb up into the boat,
Has both his bruised and bleeding hands cut off,
And sinks again into the weltering sea,
Helpless and hopeless!

" HYPOLITO.

" Yet thou shalt not perish.
The strength of thine own arm is thy salvation.
Above thy head, through rifted clouds, there shines
A glorious star. Be patient. Trust thy star!
(*Sound of a village bell in the distance.*)

" VICTORIAN.

" Ave Maria! I hear the sacristan
Ringing the chimes from yonder village belfry!
A solemn sound, that echoes far and wide
Over the red roofs of the cottages,
And bids the laboring hind afield, the shepherd
Guarding his flock, the lonely muleteer,

And all the crowd in village streets, stand still,
And breathe a prayer unto the blessed Virgin!

" HYPOLITO.

" Amen! amen! Not half a league from hence
The village lies.

" VICTORIAN.

" This path will lead us to it,
Over the wheat-fields, where the shadows sail
Across the running sea, now green, now blue,
And, like an idle mariner on the main,
Whistles the quail. Come, let us hasten on.

[*Exeunt.*"

Few poets excel the author of the "Spanish Student" in the art with which he takes a well-known thought, either from some other poet or one common as the air, and combining other images equally hackneyed, moulds them into one harmonious speech, without the slightest appearance of patchwork.

In the scene between Bartolomé and Preciosa there is a felicitous instance of this ingenious dovetailing.

" All holy angels keep me in this hour!
Spirit of her who bore me, look upon me!
Mother of God, the glorified, protect me;
Christ and the saints, be merciful unto me.
Yet why should I fear death? what is 't to die?
To leave all disappointment, care, and sorrow,

To leave all falsehood, treachery, and unkindness,
All ignominy, suffering, and despair,
And be at rest for ever! O dull heart,
Be of good cheer! When thou shalt cease to beat,
Then shalt thou cease to suffer and complain!"

The following part of this scene, where Victorian and Hypolito meet Preciosa, is like reading from Beaumont and Fletcher, softened into the woman!

Hypolito's speech at the reconciliation is happily stated.

"All gentle quarrels in the pastoral poets,
All passionate love-scenes in the best romances,
All chaste embraces on the public stage,
All soft adventures, which the liberal stars
Have winked at, as the natural course of things,
Have been surpassed here by my friend, the student,
And this sweet Gipsy lass, fair Preciosa!"

The character of Hypolito is well sketched. His adieu to the Student's wandering life is admirably done.

"So farewell
The student's wandering life! Sweet serenades,
Sung under ladies' windows in the night,
And all that makes vacation beautiful!
To you, ye cloistered shades of Alcalá,
To you, ye radiant visions of romance,
Written in books, but here surpassed by truth,
The Bachelor Hypolito returns,
And leaves the Gipsy with the Spanish Student."

There is a fine passage in the last scene.

"VICTORIAN.

"This is the highest point: here let us rest.
See, Preciosa, see how all about us,
Kneeling like hooded friars, the misty mountains
Receive the benediction of the sun.
O! glorious sight.

"PRECIOSA.

"Most beautiful, indeed.

"HYPOLITO.

"Most wonderful!

"VICTORIAN.

"And in the vale below,
Where yonder steeples flash like lifted halberds,
San Ildefonso, from its noisy belfries,
Sends up a salutation to the morn,
As if an army smote their brazen shields
And shouted victory!"

A friend has observed that this has been suggested by Wordsworth's far-famed passage in the "Excursion." We do not perceive the resemblance in form, although we feel it in spirit. With regard to such "stolen thoughts," we are inclined to say, with the Emperor (when he was told Mozart stole his best melodies from the old masters)

that he wished the gentlemen who complained would also steal a few like them.

It is always pleasant to compare poets with each other, so we make no apology for transcribing the following lines from Wordsworth:

> "What soul was his, when from the naked top
> Of some bold headland he beheld the sun
> Rise up, and bathe the world in light? He looked;
> Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
> And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
> In gladness and deep joy; the clouds were touched,
> And in their silent faces did he read
> Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
> Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
> The spectacle; sensations, soul and form
> All melted into him; they swallowed up
> His animal being; in them did he live,
> And by them did he live; they were his life.
> In such access of mind, in such high tones
> Of visitation from the living God,
> Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired;
> No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request.
> Rapt into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
> His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
> That made him—it was blessedness and love."

There is little doubt but that Longfellow has been too much disposed to think how other poets have written, and would write, rather than trust to his own impulses. We are, conse-

quently, ever and anon reminded of passages in foreign writers, which materially impair our faith in his originality of mind. Nevertheless, if the end of poetry is to afford pleasure, the author of Evangeline is sure of a favorable reception from the student and the peasant. Coming fresh from the perusal of the Spanish Student, we feel that it is too frail a fabric to bear the test of a mixed audience, but for a company of young ladies and their lovers it is one of the most gracefully adapted of modern pieces. Every word is elaborately placed, and the melody of the rhythm is a musical accompaniment of itself. But it is as a writer of occasional verses that Longfellow will be popular with the people. We question if any but a few peculiar admirers will ever read his Evangeline or Spanish Student a second time, while they will recur over and over again to his minor poems. They will not pause to inquire with the critic whether this beautiful thought is taken from an English poet, or translated literally from the German. They read not to criticise, but to admire—not to think, but to feel. They wish to receive pleasure, not to explain it away. This system of objection may be carried to any extent. A celebrated divine, who prided himself upon his originality, and who would reject his best thought if he thought it was traceable to any previous author, was startled one day by a friend coolly telling him that his favorite discourse was stolen every word from a book he had at home. The astonished writer, staggered by his friend's earnestness, begged for a sight of this volume. He, however, was released from his misery by the other smilingly announcing the work in question to be Johnson's Dictionary,

where, continued his tormentor, I undertake to find every word of your discourse.

The different views which men may take of the same subject, even under the same aspect, are well illustrated in a story we heard some years ago. It is given to the reign of James the First, of England. This monarch, as is well known, was famous for his admiration of all the frivolities of literature. He was delighted one day to hear that a man had arrived from Paris who could talk by signs, and understand any one else who possessed that accomplishment. In order to test his veracity, the curious king empowered one of his courtiers to find another man who was similarly endowed. Determined to have some sport, he consulted a shrewd fellow of his household, who said that he knew one, a raw Scotchman, who would be the very man for the purpose.

On the day in question these rival masters of the silent language of signs were brought before the pedantic monarch, who was on his throne surrounded by his court. The two professors sat on a platform where all eyes were placed on them.

The foreign professor began first. He held up *one* finger—the Scotchman looked steadily and held up *two;* the reply of his antagonist was holding up *three;* the other then closed his hand, and held it up deliberately in the other's face. Hereupon the foreign professor declared aloud that he was vanquished, for the other was a greater master than himself, as he perfectly understood a system which he thought was known only to himself.

The monarch, anxious to convince himself there was no collusion between the two professors, resolved to examine them

apart. Left alone with the foreigner, his account was this. I held up one finger to say there was but *one* God—the Father; your professor held up two fingers, to signify that there was another, the *Father* and the *Son*. I then held up three, to signify there were *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*. Upon this my opponent closed his hand, to certify that those *Three are One*. The monarch was charmed; the explanation was entirely confirmed by the facts; he was present and saw all.

Still, to render assurance doubly sure, he resolved to question the other. His explanation, which was in broad Scotch, was this: "Please your majesty, when I saw the fool hold up *one* finger I held up *two*, to show I could beat him there. When the dog held up *three* to mock me, I got angry, and *doubled my fist*, signifying I could knock him down if I had any more of that nonsense." The critical king was perfectly satisfied that two persons may very differently explain the same thing.

We hope our readers will pardon this story, but we think the critics may receive it with some profit.

Among the occasional pieces of Mr. Longfellow are his lines to the Village Blacksmith. There is a vigor of portraiture about them which is not very often the characteristic of our poet's muse. He is seldom so graphic as this:

"Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hand,
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

"His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan,
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

* * * * *

"And the children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor."

To this fine poem the author very unnecessarily appends the moral in the old way of Æsop's Fables:

"Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought,
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought."

There is a great sympathy with nature in most of Mr. Longfellow's writings, but it is not of that fresh, dewy kind which shows nature. There is too much of being persuaded into the loveliness of outward things by an effort of the mind, and not of the heart; there is more of the scholar than the lover in his

admiration. He is too fastidious to be natural. His hymns to his Goddess breathe too strongly of the lamp.

"Pleasant it was, when woods were green,
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternately come and go.

"Or where the denser grove receives
No sunlight from above,
But the dark foliage interweaves
In one unbroken roof of leaves,
Underneath whose sloping eaves
The shadows hardly move.

"Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground;
His hoary arms uplifted he,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee,
With one continuous sound.

"A slumberous sound—a sound that brings
The feeling of a dream,
As of innumerable wings,
As when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings,
O'er meadow, lake, and stream."

All this, though reminding us strongly of Coleridge, both in

thought and expression, is a very favorable specimen of that elegant sympathy with nature which is so distinguishing a feature in our author's poetry. It lacks that freshness which has made Wordsworth so great a writer. Listen for a moment to the great High Priest of the open air:

"In vain through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

"At noon, when by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky.

* * * * *

"A savage wildness round him hung,
As of a dweller out of doors,
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen,
Of mountains and of dreary moors."

Peter Bell.

We should, however, be doing Mr. Longfellow injustice were we to confine our extracts to his descriptions of nature. He is a firm believer in the better part of human kind. In his Psalm of Life he has declared this faith.

"Life is real—life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal!

Dust thou art—to dust returnest—
Was not spoken of the soul!

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way:
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us further than to-day."

The following verse contains a beautiful image:

"Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts though stout and brave,
Still like muffled-drums are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

* * * * *

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time!

"Footprints! that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er Life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing shall take heart again!"

This "psalm" is eminently poetical, and has doubtless in the future much fine effect locked up in it. The acorn holds the oak, and the oak in time floats a palace o'er the ocean. How often has the unregarded phrase of one time been the inspirer to the glorious deed of another! We remember one instance, in which a father named his child

after a celebrated man, in the express hope that should he at any time feel sinking to the degradation of a mean action, the sound of his name might recall him to the path of honor!

There are, notwithstanding, many happy instances of Mr. Longfellow's talent for applying a fact to a feeling, and of illustrating the processes of duty by metaphors drawn from outside life. This very facility is sometimes fatal: it very often becomes common-place, so that we feel inclined now and then to resent a truism as though it were a falsehood; at all events, to treat it as an impertinence or an intrusion. This strikes us as the prevailing defect in many otherwise very fine poems. We may instance as a proof of this, some otherwise very fine lines which are spoiled by this obtrusive subjectiveness.

"There is a reaper whose name is Death,
And with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

* * * *

"He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves,
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

* * * *

"Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The reaper came that day,
'T was an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away."

This sounds more like Watts's hymns than a philosophical reflection modified by the spirit of poetry, the highest expression of philosophy. Although somewhat out of keeping, we cannot help here quoting a ludicrous explanation which Leigh Hunt once gave of the difference between philosophy and poetry. He said it was the difference between mutton and venison: and apostrophized "venison as the poetry of mutton!"

In the commencement of the "Hymn to the Night" there is an instance of bad taste in the selection of metaphors, which rarely happens to our author.

"I heard the trailing garments of the night
Sweep through her marble halls;
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls."

He redeems this artificial imagery by the following verse:

"I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm majestic presence of the night,
As of the one I love!

* * *

"O, holy night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has done before;
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of care,
And they complain no more!"

We must, however, warn Mr. Longfellow against the indis-

criminate use of "stars" and celestial machinery: it shows either a poverty of illustration, or an indolence in searching after new combinations.

In the following he copies some of the puerilities of Wordsworth's earlier poems. It should, however, be borne in mind that the English reformer of verse had an object in view when he thus violently rushed into the opposite extreme, which Longfellow has not. When Wordsworth wrote, the Rosa-Matildaish style was predominant. The moon, stars, and other natural objects were banished from decent poetry, and "luna," "stella," "lamps of light," "Apollo," &c., were invoked by the whole regiment. The palate then was so diseased that a violent remedy was required.

"The night is come, but not too soon,
And sinking silently,
All silently, the little moon
Drops down behind the sky."

In the "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year," our American poet has forgotten how completely Alfred Tennyson had anticipated him.

The same remark applies to the poem entitled, "Woods in Winter:" it is too much like Southey's poem "On Winter." Mr. Longfellow has only to be warned of these coincidences, for we are sure he has too much poetical wealth of his own to render borrowing from another necessary.

The great fault of many of the poems before us is their elegant diffusiveness: they would have been twice as good

had they been only half as long. There is, however, a want of condensation in most of his productions.

As a proof of success in the difficult department of sonnet writing, we shall quote one on

"DANTE.

"Tuscan, that wanderest through the realms of gloom,
With thoughtful pace, and sad majestic eyes,
Stern thoughts and awful from thy soul arise,
Like Farinata from his fiery tomb.
Thy sacred song is like the trump of doom!
Yet in thy heart what human sympathies,
What soft compassion glows, as in the skies
The tender stars their clouded lamps relume!
Methinks I see thee stand, with pallid cheeks,
By Fra Hilario, in his diocese,
As up the convent walls, in golden streaks,
The ascending sunbeams mark the day's decrease.
And as he asks what there the stranger seeks,
Thy voice along the cloister whispers, '*Peace!*'"

Our limits will not allow us to bestow any space upon "Kavanagh." Although in prose, there is too much poetry in Longfellow's mind to take him into the lower region of art, without a constant return to the loftier realms. Its popularity renders quotation needless. We shall, therefore, content ourselves by stating that it displays powers of observation and skill in writing of the peculiarities of New England life, we did not give our author credit for.

We conclude this attempt to examine the works of a popular

poet by the opinion that his great want is self-reliance. He is too apt to consult poetical precedents, instead of boldly chalking out a path for himself. His very studies have been against him. When a poet trusts to another for his thoughts he will soon lose his individuality. We do not say this has actually happened to Mr. Longfellow, but we see many evidences of a tendency to indulge in that fatal habit, which we think in his case springs more from indolence than want of power. Let him resolutely think and write for himself, retaining his force, elegance, and purity of diction, but throwing from him his undue elaboration and diffusiveness of execution: let him care less for what others have written, and more of what he ought and can write, and boldly throwing away his artificial supports, soar unaided into an element of his own: let him scorn another's balloon, and boldly take to his own wings, and then America will have reason to consider as one of her best poets Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.

Mr. Prescott seems to us to combine many of the qualities requisite to make a popular historian. Less philosophical than Hume, he is more graphic and interesting; and the charm of his narrative so far exceeds the cold and dispassionate style of Hallam, as to give him a decided advantage over that classical and condensed historian. We must not, however, forget that the subjects treated of by Mr. Prescott are his own selection, and the most attractive on record. The unbaring to the eyes of the old world the other half so long buried in the western waters, is undoubtedly the greatest marvel in the history of the world. It is almost tantamount to some adventurous spirit reaching the moon and leading his companions to explore its mysterious recesses. It may be doubted if curiosity is not the controlling passion of the large majority of human kind, and mystery is the greatest provocative to its exercise existing. The discovery of America roused the known world into an activity unparalleled in history. Had a new planet suddenly swung alongside our earth, and courted millions by the easiest of conveyances to land and trace its wonders, not more astonishment could have

been manifested. It was the absorbing topic, and even now the desire to be mentally present at that time exists in full force. Every one seems anxious to accompany the daring few who unsealed the wonders of the new world, and we venture to say never has the true nature of a historian for those exciting times been better developed than in the author now under notice.

Every passage is based on a fact, while it reads as a romance. There is the dignity of truth and the chivalric exciting spirit of adventure harmoniously blended. Nor is he less successful in tracing with the eye of a shrewd observer the progress of those changes which in time affect the stability of states. Every nation, like every individual, has its birth, manhood, and death; but just as a nation exceeds a man in amount, so do its processes work with a proportionable slowness. There is nothing in one generation to show how far the shadow of decay has crept over the vast complexity of interests which constitutes a nation. We see not in a single year the stealing change in a human being, but a decade is unmistakable. In like manner the journalist lives and dies, and has no tangible mark to show how far the day has advanced in the life of his own country, or in those around him; but the historian, looking back from the eminence of Time, beholds the ascent and the decline. But it not alone requires the philosophical eye to see this, but it also requires other qualities to make this apparent to others. If the writer treats this in a dry, technical manner, the lesson is lost to the world; it only exists as a book of reference to the scholar or the antiquary; it buries itself in its own dust, and rots

in the sepulchre of its own research. But when a man comes who has the power, he bids the dead Lazarus of a life of labor come forth and talk to the masses of mankind.

A first-rate historian requires powers seldom found in one man. A deficiency of any of these qualities is more apparent and deteriorates the whole, more than the absence of any single faculty in the poet, the philosopher, or the novelist. A poet may be of first-rate excellence without the possession of a philosophical mind: he may be unapproached as a lyrical writer. The philosopher may be great, and yet altogether destitute of poetical imagination. The metaphysician may be a pioneer into a new world of thought, and yet be devoid of imagination or command of language. It is only a great dramatist, like Shakspeare or Schiller, who enjoys so large a combination of opposite qualities. In like manner, the great historian is in the world of fact what the dramatist is in the world of fiction. He requires a philosophical mind; a keen insight into human nature; a patient investigation of conflicting testimonies; a power of judging from the context, and in seizing upon the most probable fact, out of the very instinct which always accompanies a large and accurate knowledge of human nature; and above all, he must possess the Promethean spark of imagination to put all this into coherent life and motion, when he has gathered the dead materials of the past. He must satisfactorily answer the question, "*Can these dry bones live?*"

A great merit in Mr. Prescott is the total absence he displays of all onesidedness. He is less subjective than any prominent historian we are aequainted with. This is a rare

virtue. A glance at the most celebrated authors will prove this. While Lingard's statements must be received with caution whenever his Romanist prejudices come into play, Gibbon is not to be trusted on account of his hatred of Christianity. Hume, without any dislike to Christianity in particular, has a strong tendency to infidelity in general. These objections apply only to religious opinions; but when we come to a political bias the disturbing influences are enormous. Who can trust Robertson, where the evidence conflicts, on the Queen of Scotland?—and few can receive the special-pleading of Hume, as conclusive, on the civil war in England. Even Macintosh and Macaulay are swayed by these elements, and it is, perhaps, difficult to find any entirely free from them. Now we claim for Mr. Prescott a great exemption from this evil; he is decidedly an objective writer; there is the eloquence of the pleader, and the impartiality of the judge; and we feel, as we proceed in his details, that we can place confidence in his verdicts.

Another distinguishing trait is in his endeavor to throw his readers back into the times he is treating on. He is not content with considering the past as the past, but he endeavors to carry us back to the time itself. Many, consequently, consider the commencement of his histories tedious, but we feel glad afterwards that we have listened to the exordium. Coleridge was in the habit of observing that it is said, any fool can ask a question, but it takes a wise man to answer it; his version was, it also took a wise man to put the question aright. We have, therefore, often heard common-place men accuse Coleridge of never giving a direct answer. When this was named

to him one day, by a "yes and no" man, the great logician smiled at the ignorance and folly of the objector; and began forthwith to explain to the bewildered blockhead that it required also a wise man to put a question in a proper shape. There is scarcely an inquiry in the world, either metaphysical, circumstantial, or personal, that is capable of being directly answered. It requires a thorough investigation of all points connected with the subject to be able to master what the interrogator wants.

This applies in an eminent manner to history. It is not enough to narrate the actions just as they happened, or to report the speeches just as they were said. It is indispensably necessary that the starting-ground should be thoroughly reconnoitred. Without this we answer, just as men walk in the dark over a field they are ignorant of; they may put their foot on firm ground, or fall headlong down some yawning chasm. It is absolutely requisite that some insight should be had into the history, pursuits, and designs of the actors, and some personal knowledge of the man. Then we are better able to judge how far the historian puts true motives for this or that equivocal act. Many deeds, now apparently obscure or startling, are perfectly intelligible when judged in context with others; but taken singly and alone they are enough to damn a man's reputation and contradict his whole career. We need only glance at this; to insist upon it would be a waste of time. We leave every reader to fill up the sketch out of his own experience.

Now it occurs to us that the author before us feels this necessity in all its force, and that he does his best to remedy the

defect. Not content with starting at the beginning of the drama, he very properly gives us a history of the characters before the commencement, so that we are prepared, as the pageant of fate moves on, to recognise the æsthetic truth of each man's life. Nor does this destroy the interest of the denouement; it greatly adds to it. A personal knowledge of any one always enhances the interest we feel in his fortunes, and it is half the task of a writer to enlist the attention of his readers. This is a hard labor to accomplish, but it ought to be done, otherwise the relator of the event is a narrator, and not a historian. Another besetting sin with this class of writers is their liability to over-estimate the importance of some particular event. How easy is it to exaggerate this fact and diminish that? An undue prominence is thus given to a secondary idea, and so far history is falsified. The historian lies as much by the concealment of a fact, or even of an extenuating motive, as though he boldly stated the reverse of the case.

Properly treated, history should be a plain, ungarbled account of events as they really happened, accompanied with as much light as can be thrown upon the public stage by the private biographies of the actors themselves. In addition to this we should have the abuses of the time, and the irritative causes conspiring to rouse the masses calmly placed before us, so that a reason should be given for every result. To complete all, a careful summary should be drawn up, to show the amount of human advancement in the progress of this great spectacle, where nations are actors, empires scenes, crowns baubles, and revolutions the denouement.

This is the cause why romance is devoured in preference to

history. We are chilled into apathy by the generalization of the latter, while the personal specialties of the former are enchaining to old and young. Yet a moment's reflection is sufficient to convince all that the excitement of the one is far superior to the other. What can exceed the magnificence of a drama when kings are actors? And yet so badly managed is history generally that every lesson is received with lassitude.

When Mr. Prescott has prepared the argument of his works he becomes graphic. Till then there may appear too great an anxiety for every one to know everything. This is, however, a fault on the right side.

While he has a proper horror of tyranny, we observe a charity extending even to the perpetrator of the outrage; action and reaction follow each other in natural steps. The French Revolution, dreadful as were its excesses, was created by the enormities of the ancient regime; centuries of wrong-doing were heaped into one measure, and poured out at once on the devoted heads of the offending class. The narrator who regards the vengeance as distinct from the provocation, only sees one half the question, and his opinion is worthless. The true philosopher is sensible they are inseparable, and would be more astonished at the absence of the catastrophe than that it occurred.

Mr. Prescott's first work was the result of a labor of many years, and was called "The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella." It displays many faults which a young writer would naturally fall into—an ostentatious display at word painting, and an attempt at fine writing. This censure, however,

only applies to the earlier chapters, which display a cumbrous diction not at all native to his style. As the work proceeds the author has gained his native element, and is thoroughly master of his vocation.

Mr. Prescott has divided his history of Ferdinand and Isabella into two parts, prefaced with an introduction, which partakes of his usual painstaking. The description of the Castilian monarchy, with its manners, customs, &c., is as complete as it is possible to make it. The reader feels at once among the nation described, and becomes imbued with many of the feelings of that momentous time.

The second part opens with a luminous review of the condition of Europe, and the bearing which the different states had upon the most important monarchy then existing. This is stated with admirable impartiality, and impresses every one that the writer was thoroughly master of his subject. Some of the characters in this work are sketched with great force and precision. We would especially notice Ferdinand and his noble wife. Columbus is done con amore, and stands out in bold relief, as he should do, the greatest of his time. Ximenes is likewise well drawn. Rising from the perusal of this work it seems as though we had a personal acquaintance with the chief actors in this eventful drama. The sagacity of Ferdinand seems as characteristic of him, as the fine womanly, heroism and nobility of soul are of his glorious wife. Six years after the publication of this work appeared his History of the Conquest of Mexico. For this he possessed advantages seldom vouchsafed to any author. The Spanish Government placed at his disposal unpublished correspondence, chronicles, legal documents, &c.,

sufficient to set up a dozen historians. From Mexico he also received most important and valuable assistance. Nor were these unusual advantages thrown away. As an English reviewer has observed, many of the characters are so well and vividly described that we may almost be permitted to call Mr. Prescott the Homer of history. We cannot, ourselves, go to this extent, but we frankly acknowledge that of all historical writers he possesses more of the epic romancist than any narrative writer of the day.

We have heard some of his most extravagant admirers contend that the Conquest of Mexico is a magnificent poem. This is absurdity; we can, however, truly predicate that it possesses many of the chief ingredients. Till Mr. Prescott published his voluminous histories there was much vagueness in the knowledge possessed by the masses on the subjects of which he has treated; he seems suddenly to have illuminated the general world, and to have created a knowledge where before there was a darkness. This is seldom achieved without the possession of that peculiar power termed genius, and we consider ourselves within the bounds of demonstration when we say that in these respects we consider Mr. Prescott as deserving the rare distinction of having a genius for historical composition.

We should like to present to the reader the passages we have alluded to, but our space will not permit us. We cannot, however, avoid quoting the closing pages of the "Conquest of Mexico." Here we have a passage full of Mr. Prescott's merits and blemishes. His partiality to Cortes is excessive; this is, however, on the right side; when it is known, we can guard against the bias. We can easily pardon an author's partiality

for a subject, more especially a biographer for his hero. All we require is a calm statement of facts, nothing extenuate, or aught set down in malice. We are then in a position to counteract the warmth of coloring of the poet, or the undue partiality of the advocate.

The character of Cortes has either been the subject of outrageous abuse, or else of fulsome adulation. Mr. Prescott, after a careful balancing of the conflicting evidence, sums up candidly :—

"He was a knight-errant, in the literal sense of the word. Of all the band of adventurous cavaliers, whom Spain, in the sixteenth century, sent forth on the career of discovery and conquest, there was none more deeply filled with the spirit of romantic enterprise than Hernando Cortés. Dangers and difficulties, instead of deterring, seemed to have a charm in his eyes. They were necessary to rouse him to a full consciousness of his powers. He grappled with them at the outset, and, if I may so express myself, seemed to prefer to take his enterprises by the most difficult side. He conceived, at the first moment of his landing in Mexico, the design of its conquest. When he saw the strength of its civilization, he was not turned from his purpose. When he was assailed by the superior force of Narvaez, he still persisted in it; and, when he was driven in ruin from the capital, he still cherished his original idea. How successfully he carried it into execution we have seen." ....

This is no doubt true of every great mind. It is this peculiarity which distinguishes the hero from the charlatan; the man who is reasoned, bullied, or laughed out of an opinion,

once deliberately stated to the world, is only fit to be a slave, and not a master.

Prescott thus proceeds :

"This spirit of knight-errantry might lead us to undervalue his talents as a general, and to regard him merely in the light of a lucky adventurer. But this would be doing him injustice; for Cortés was certainly a great general, if that man be one, who performs great achievements with the resources which his own genius has created. There is probably no instance in history, where so vast an enterprise has been achieved by means apparently so inadequate. He may be truly said to have effected the Conquest by his own resources. If he was indebted for his success to the co-operation of the Indian tribes, it was the force of his genius that obtained command of such materials. He arrested the arm that was lifted to smite him, and made it do battle in his behalf. He beat the Tlascalans, and made them his stanch allies. He beat the soldiers of Narvaez, and doubled his effective force by it. When his own men deserted him, he did not desert himself. He drew them back by degrees, and compelled them to act by his will, till they were all as one man. He brought together the most miscellaneous collection of mercenaries who ever fought under one standard; adventurers from Cuba and the Isles, craving for gold; hidalgos, who came from the old country to win laurels; broken-down cavaliers, who hoped to mend their fortunes in the New World; vagabonds flying from justice; the grasping followers of Narvaez, and his own reckless veterans,—men with hardly a common tie, and burning with the spirit of jealousy and faction; wild tribes of the natives from all parts of the country, who had been sworn enemies from their cradles, and who had met only to cut one another's throats, and to procure victims

for sacrifice; men, in short, differing in race, in language, and in interests, with scarcely anything in common among them. Yet this motley congregation was assembled in one camp, compelled to bend to the will of one man, to consort together in harmony, to breathe, as it were, one spirit, and to move on a common principle of action! It is in this wonderful power over the discordant masses thus gathered under his banner, that we recognise the genius of the great commander, no less than in the skill of his military operations."

Here again the historian dwells too much on a general fact, and absolutely turns it into an individual virtue. This was eminently the case with Hannibal, Scipio, and many other generals. Then why seems it so particular in Cortes?

With a singular mixture of simplicity and superfluity of statement, Mr. Prescott actually favors the public with the reasons for this result.

"His power over the minds of his soldiers was a natural result of their confidence in his abilities. But it is also to be attributed to his popular manners,—that happy union of authority and companionship, which fitted him for the command of a band of roving adventurers. It would not have done for him to have fenced himself round with the stately reserve of a commander of regular forces. He was embarked with his men in a common adventure, aud nearly on terms of equality, since he held his commission by no legal warrant. But, while he indulged this freedom and familiarity with his soldiers, he never allowed it to interfere with their strict obedience, nor to impair the severity of discipline. When he had risen to higher consideration, although he affected more state, he still admitted his veterans to the same intimacy. 'He prefer-

red,' says Diaz, 'to be called Cortés by us, to being called by any title; and with good reason,' continues the enthusiastic old cavalier, 'for the name of Cortés is as famous in our day as was that of Cæsar among the Romans, or of Hannibal among the Carthaginians.' He showed the same kind regard towards his ancient comrades in the very last act of his life. For he appropriated a sum by his will for the celebration of two thousand masses for the souls of those who had fought with him in the campaigns of Mexico."

The following quotation is, however, open to the gravest censure: it is not borne out by the evidence.

"Cortés was not a vulgar conqueror. He did not conquer from the mere ambition of conquest. If he destroyed the ancient capital of the Aztecs, it was to build up a more magnificent capital on its ruins. If he desolated the land, and broke up its existing institutions, he employed the short period of his administration in digesting schemes for introducing there a more improved culture and a higher civilization. In all his expeditions he was careful to study the resources of the country, its social organization, and its physical capacities. He enjoined it on his captains to attend particularly to these objects. If he was greedy of gold, like most of the Spanish cavaliers in the New World, it was not to hoard it, nor merely to lavish it in the support of a princely establishment, but to secure funds for prosecuting his glorious discoveries. Witness his costly expeditions to the Gulf of California. His enterprises were not undertaken solely for mercenary objects; as is shown by the various expeditions he set on foot for the discovery of a communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific. In his schemes of ambition he showed a respect for the interests of

science, to be referred partly to the natural superiority of his mind, but partly, no doubt, to the influence of early education. It is, indeed, hardly possible, that a person of his wayward and mercurial temper should have improved his advantages at the University, but he brought away from it a tinctnre of scholarship, seldom found among the cavaliers of the period, and which had its influence in enlarging his own conceptions. His celebrated Letters are written with a simple elegance, that, as I have already had occasion to remark, have caused them to be compared to the military narrative of Cæsar. It will not be easy to find in the chronicles of the period a more concise, yet comprehensive, statement, not only of the events of his campaigns, but of the circumstances most worthy of notice in the character of the conquered countries.

"Cortés was not cruel; at least, not cruel as compared with most of those who followed his iron trade. The path of the conqueror is necessarily marked with blood. He was not too scrupulous, indeed, in the execution of his plans. He swept away the obstacles which lay in his track; and his fame is darkened by the commission of more than one act which his boldest apologists will find it hard to vindicate. But he was not wantonly cruel. He allowed no outrage on his unresisting foes. This may seem small praise, but it is an exception to the usual conduct of his countrymen in their conquests, and it is something to be in advance of one's time. He was severe, it may be added, in enforcing obedience to his orders for protecting their persons and their property. With his licentious crew, it was sometimes not without hazard that he was so. After the Conquest, he sanctioned the system of *repartimientos;* but so did Columbus. He endeavored to regulate it by the most humane laws, and continued to suggest many important changes for ameliorating the condition of the natives. The best commentary on his conduct, in this respect, is the deference that was shown him by the Indians, and the con-

fidence with which they appealed to him for protection in all their subsequent distresses."

Here we leave the case in the hands of the reader; we cannot judge so favorably of the great butcher.

Mr. Prescott concludes his character of the warrior by this attempt to explain away or account for his superstition:

"One trait more remains to be noticed in the character of this remarkable man; that is, his bigotry, the failing of the age,—for surely it should be termed only a failing. When we see the hand, red with the blood of the wretched native, raised to invoke the blessing of Heaven on the cause which it maintains, we experience something like a sensation of disgust at the act, and doubt of its sincerity. Bnt this is unjust. We should throw ourselves back (it cannot be too often repeated) into the age; the age of the Crusades. For every Spanish cavalier, however sordid and selfish might be his private motives, felt himself to be the soldier of the Cross. Many of them would have died in defence of it. Whoever has read the correspondence of Cortés, or, still more, has attended to the circumstances of his career, will hardly doubt that he would have been among the first to lay down his life for the Faith. He more than once perilled life, and fortune, and the success of his whole enterprise, by the premature and most impolitic manner in which he would have forced conversion on the natives. To the more rational spirit of the present day, enlightened by a purer Christianity, it may seem difficult to reconcile gross deviations from morals with such devotion to the cause of religion. But the religion taught in that day was one of form and elaborate ceremony. In the punctilious attention to discipline, the spirit of Christianity was permitted to evaporate. The mind, occupied with

forms, thinks little of substance. In a worship that is addressed too exclusively to the senses, it is often the case that morality becomes divorced from religion, and the measure of righteousness is determined by the creed rather than by the conduct."

Our historian need only to have gone to the Te Deums of London and Paris, the twin centres of civilization, for an excuse for Hernando Cortes. We, however, expect a higher standard from a man of Mr. Prescott's calibre.

In his next great work, the "Conquest of Peru," we recognise a still greater advance, and the public have accorded great preference for it. It is undoubtedly the most popular of Mr. Prescott's productions.

There are more force and clearness in this history than in his others; the adjuncts are painted with more brilliancy, and the scenes are more vividly before us. Some may consider that the author has treated this with more freedom of coloring than is allowable, but we incline to the belief that a historical picture should be as brightly painted as a scene from the "Midsummer Night's Dream."

The "Conquest of Peru" has more of that terrible retribution in it which makes history a great instructor. From the first page to the last, we behold that master-spirit of cruelty, avarice, and fraud, Pizarro, preparing for his own inevitable fate. His very successes, almost miraculous, lure him to destruction. And after a time, when his great triumphs seemed to invest him with the monopoly of wrong-doing, he falls by the hands of assassins. The old proverb, "that sure destruction dogs the steps of crime," is visible in the

histories of Pizarro and Napoleon, very clearly. But the powers they offended were different. The Spaniard outraged *humanity;* the Corsican, *liberty*. The recoil was equally crushing. There also appears a sort of poetical fitness in the punishments awarded to each. The outrager of humanity lost his life; the violator of liberty his freedom. One was killed; the other was a captive. A celebrated poet has observed, that the history of the world is a game of chess which has not yet been played out. What is termed a revolution is merely a change in the phase of the game. Many may consider this the view of a Fatalist, but we do not see why this word should be used when there is the better word Necessity. Fatalism, in human progress, is Calvinism in religion: it paralyses effort. Under one aspect, inaction is as good as energy. But this is only *one aspect*. It has, however, the counterbalancing virtue of fortitude.

No sane man ever believed that Calvinism in religion, and Necessity in politics, meant stagnation of thought and action. This would be a living death; a complete and suicidal solecism.

The true light by which history ought to be read, is the certainty of every fact producing its kind. What we sow, we reap. Tyranny is the parent of anarchy, which, in its turn, begets another despotism. Throw human freedom down, and in proportion to the force of the overthrow will be the violence of the rebound. Action and reaction revolve constantly, and produce events which constitute the life of humanity.

It would be a curious study to consider the world dra-

matically. To take an age, and treat it as an act, carrying out Shakspeare's maxim:

> "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

How differently would the actions of men then appear! With what greater tolerance should we regard the doers of evil, while recognising the part played by each, and the necessity for every word and deed! The master-passion of an age could be easily detected, and the vibration of the human pendulum seen and accounted for. The life of the human race treated in this manner would, however, require a man of first-rate intellect. He must be the Shakspeare of facts. A *fact* is nothing apart from its *cause*. It is a dead body. *Motive* is the life of a *fact*. The largest collection of them in the world would be but hieroglyphics, the key to which is lost; a jumble of conjurors' signs, without the magical power. But when the skeleton is filled up with flesh and muscles, a nervous system added, and the whole garbed in the satiny robe of skin, we perceive the beauty of the living form.

We do not wish to be fanciful in a critical matter, but we think we shall better explain our theory of history by carrying out this metaphor, than by a lengthened analysis.

The skeleton of history is undoubtedly the facts themselves; the flesh is the common element which composes the masses of mankind; the muscles are the men of action; the nervous system is the sympathies and intelligence of the educated classes; the brain is composed of the thinking men; the

heart is the philanthropist; the skin is the decency of life; and the robes in which the form is clothed are the changing fashions and popular impressions of the time.

With this rough view of the question, it is evident that it requires a peculiar combination to faithfully anatomize this curious and elaborate physique.

We have before alluded to the besetting sins of the principal writers of history: the pomposity and infidelity of Gibbon; the passionless, dry detailism of Hallam; the local prejudice and half-philosophy of Robertson; the brilliant poetical distortions of Michelet; the artful undercurrent of Guizot; the Romanist bigotry of Lingard; the brilliant special pleading of Macaulay; the metaphysical elaboration of Macintosh; the strong individuality of Carlyle; the patient research of Sharon Turner; the want of earnestness, and scepticism of Hume. This list comprises the principal men who have tried their hands on this difficult branch of literature, and is a strong evidence of the difficulty of success.

Now, the American writer has brought to his task patience—learning—an earnest desire to elicit the truth—a clear and picturesque style—a wish to acquaint the reader with all the prominent circumstances of the case—and a thorough knowledge of the importance of throwing himself into the prevailing opinions, feelings, and customs of the times described.

These are strong points in his favor, and we feel assured the verdict of posterity will be, that although he is inferior to some of his fellow-laborers in that individual force which

constitutes genius, he is far more qualified to present to the public the aggregate result of his various labors.

We shall not discuss his volume of "Biographical and Critical Essays," as we here treat of him only as the greatest historian America has produced, and one who is fully equal to sustain an honorable comparison with his European brethren. We predict that when he chooses a more extended survey of the biography of the human family he will not be found wanting.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

THERE is a calm classical dignity about Mr. Bryant's muse, which in the eyes of many is considered as an equivalent for that fire and energy which is so fascinating to the lovers of poetry. The tone of his productions is elevated, but not stirring. We assent to his reflections: we do not feel with him. There is nothing rapid and breathless in his flights: they are equable and sustained. There is an air of Grecian elegance about his writings, which convinces us he never abandons himself to the impulses of the Pythoness. At times, this amounts to a severity which chills his readers, and impresses them with the idea that he is moralizing in verse, and not throwing off the rushing thoughts that crowd his brain in the first bold snatches of sound. There is more of the cultivation of the poet than of the nature or instinct; indeed, occasionally, the determination to compose is painfully apparent; it seems the effort of his will, and not a revelation of his hidden spirit.

It is not, however, for the reader or the critic to deter-

mine in what shape or manner a poet is to write. We ought to allow thankfully the gifted one to develope himself according to his own taste. There would be an end to individuality if we were to insist upon an author's putting himself into this or that character. We cheerfully admit that the man of mind ought to choose his own circle to discourse in; nevertheless, there is implanted in every reader's breast, however faintly, a predisposition for the more exciting kinds of composition, more especially in its poetical spirit. This constitutes the cause of that popularity which ever and anon attends an author who seizes vigorously on the most salient points of human attention. This was pre-eminently the case with Byron. Every being has a certain love of the romantic implanted in him, which at once responds to the poet's appeal. It is the sound of a trumpet to the war-horse. Who ever heard military music without feeling somewhat of the soldier's spirit roused within, however apparently peacefully-disposed and gentle in everyday life?

What Mr. Bryant gains as a philosopher, he loses as a poet. Not that a poet should *not* be a philosopher, for indeed he cannot be one without, but because he makes the secondary the ascendant. Poetry includes philosophy, but it should be hidden by the poetical glow, as the color of blooming health hides the white skin of the fair maiden's cheek. This substitution of the lower for the higher faculty is very apparent in the fine poem called the "Ages." This is the longest and most ambitious of Mr. Bryant's attempts. The subject is admirably fitted for the display of power. What can be more susceptible of poetical thought and expression than a

rapid review of the history of the world? The theme is a half-inspiration of itself. Mr. Bryant, however, looks with the eye of a philosopher on the varying phases of humanity, and although we read with an attentive pleasure, we do not feel that delight which we know the subject is so admirably calculated to afford. We miss those vigorous, golden passages, which compel us to pause, and read again out of the mere enthusiasm of admiration.

We quote a few stanzas as illustrations of the manner in which our poet treats the scenes presented to his imagination.

The first we offer is a very striking one:

"Look on this beautiful world, and read the truth
In her fair page; see, every season brings
New change, to her, of everlasting youth:
Still the green soil, with joyous living things,
Swarms, the wide air is full of joyous wings,
And myriads, still, are happy in the sleep
Of ocean's azure gulfs, and where he flings
The restless surge. Eternal Love doth keep
In his complacent arms, the earth, the air, the deep."

The critic will observe a very awkward "doth keep." A poet of Mr. Bryant's great powers of versification should not have sat down under this verbal defect, small as it is. We are more exacting from him, because he is one of the few American poets who have attained a classical polish.

The opening to the panorama of the past is admirably introduced:

"Sit at the feet of history—through the night
Of years the steps of virtue she shall trace,
And show the earlier ages, where her sight
Can pierce the eternal shadows o'er the face;—
When, from the genial cradle of our race,
Went forth the tribes of men, their pleasant lot
To choose, where palm-groves cooled their dwelling-place,
Or freshening rivers ran; and there forgot
The truth of heaven, and kneeled to gods that heard them not.

"Then waited not the murderer for the night,
But smote his brother down in the bright day,
And he who felt the wrong, and had the might,
His own avenger, girt himself to slay;
Beside the path the unburied carcase lay;
The shepherd, by the fountains of the glen,
Fled, while the robber swept his flock away,
And slew his babes. The sick, untended then,
Languished in the damp shade, and died afar from men."

The poet very felicitously alludes to the dark ages of history, where so great a gap of annals exists—when even tradition dies into silence—and oblivion would be complete were it not for the mouldering ruins of unknown cities.

"Those ages have no memory—but they left
A record in the desert—columns strown
On the waste sands, and statues fallen and cleft,
Heaped like a host in battle overthrown;
Vast ruins, where the mountain's ribs of stone
Were hewn into a city; streets that spread
In the dark earth, where never breath has blown
Of heaven's sweet air, nor foot of man dares tread
The long and perilous ways—the Cities of the Dead:

"And tombs of monarchs to the clouds up-piled—
They perished—but the eternal tombs remain—
And the black precipice, abrupt and wild,
Pierced by long toil and hollowed to a fane;—
Huge piers and frowning forms of gods sustain
The everlasting arches, dark and wide,
Like the night-heaven, when clouds are black with rain.
But idly skill was tasked, and strength was plied,
All was the work of slaves to swell a despot's pride."

The poet's eye then rests on Greece, and in two stanzas gives his impressions.

In the apostrophe to Rome we feel the philosophical coolness of Mr. Bryant in its full force of negativing his poetry. There is too much of the abstract. More can be gathered often from a small event than from a dry balance-sheet of the result. We may call these personal traits of a nation. As an instance of the two styles of treating the subject, we will compare Mr. Bryant with Byron. One, all philosopher; the other, all poet: we mean, of course, so far as these views go.

"And Rome—thy sterner, younger sister, she
Who awed the world with her imperial frown—
Rome drew the spirit of her race from thee,—
The rival of thy shame and thy renown.
Yet her degenerate children sold the crown
Of earth's wide kingdoms to a line of slaves;
Guilt reigned, and woe with guilt, and plagues came down,
Till the north broke its floodgates, and the waves
Whelmed the degraded race, and weltered o'er their graves."

The generalization here materially interferes with the clear-

ness and vividness of the effect to be produced. Let us turn to Byron, and see how he treats it.

"I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

"He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday—
All this rushed with his blood—Shall he expire
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!"

We are willing to admit that it is scarcely just to select a verse at random from the American, and compare it with one of the most successful efforts of the great English poet. We, however, only intend by this comparison to illustrate that we think Mr. Bryant has injured a fine subject by throwing over it too frigid a mantle of philosophy.

With respect to the origin of these celebrated verses to the Gladiator, it is stated that Byron was indebted for them to Shelley. It has been said by Leigh Hunt, that during

the time the "gloomy Childe" was in daily intercourse with Shelley a very perceptible change in his poetry is visible. We throw this out as a study for the curious.

In the progress of his review of the world Mr. Bryant comes to the New World, and thus speaks:

"Late, from this western shore, that morning chased
The deep and ancient night, that threw its shroud
O'er the green land of groves, the beautiful waste,
Nurse of full streams, and lifter-up of proud
Sky-mingling mountains that o'erlook the cloud.
Erewhile, where yon gay spires their brightness rear,
Trees waved, and the brown hunter's shouts were loud
Amid the forest; and the bounding deer
Fled at the glancing plume, and the gaunt wolf yelled near."

Having thus traced the march of civilization westward, rising in the east like the sun, to travel to the west: going down perhaps there, like the physical light, to rise again in the east; the poet finishes his history by this apostrophe to his native land:

"But thou, my country, thou shalt never fall,
Save with thy children—thy maternal care,
Thy lavish love, thy blessings showered on all—
These are thy fetters—seas and stormy air
Are the wide barrier of thy borders, where,
Among thy gallant sons that guard thee well,
Thou laugh'st at enemies: who shall then declare
The date of thy deep-founded strength, or tell
How happy, in thy lap, the sons of men shall dwell?"

It may be affirmed that his intention was to take a calm

general view of the ages of the world; if so, he has perfectly succeeded as a philosopher, but failed somewhat as a poet. We may also observe that we do not think he shines in the Spenserian stanza.

Our readers must not think, because we intend to consider this phase of his mind the first, that we are wilfully blind to his other faculties. We shall now enter into an exposition of the more agreeable and stirring parts of his nature.

The tendency to moralize is an evil when indulged in indiscriminately; and a greater one when it is superinduced. Mr. Bryant's productions are, however, so pervaded by this predisposition that it is the leading faculty of his mind. It is, indeed, his very nature. This will always give a value to his reflections over the mere artificial moralist. We feel that it is genuine thought—no make-believe—it is deep from the poet's soul. He looks on nature with a sad calmness, like Wordsworth's muse in many of his finest moods. He, however, falls short of the art shown by the author of "Netley Abbey," of hiding his intention. As we said before, Mr. Bryant labors to obtrude his design; this, with all deference to so true a poet, we think an error, either of judgment or execution.

We give, as an instance, the commencement of the "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood."

"Stranger, if thou hast learned a truth which needs
No school of long experience, that the world
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares,
To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood

And view the haunts of Nature. The calm shade
Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze
That makes the green leaves dance, shall waft a balm
To thy sick heart. Thou wilt find nothing here
Of all that pained thee in the haunts of men
And made thee loathe thy life. The primal curse
Fell, it is true, upon the unsinning earth,
But not in vengeance. God hath yoked to guilt
Her pale tormentor, misery. Hence, these shades
Are still the abodes of gladness; the thick roof
Of green and stirring branches is alive
And musical with birds, that sing and sport
In wantonness of spirit; while below
The squirrel, with raised paws and form erect,
Chirps merrily." * * *

Again, in his "Thanatopsis," there is too much ostentation of purpose expressed in the opening.

"To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware." * *

While we are on this trail we may as well quote a few instances of this peculiarity, and then dismiss the subject altogether. It seems as though Mr. Bryant could not begin a subject in blank verse, without a superfluity of explanation, which materially destroys the pleasure of the perusal. It is very

much like impairing the unexpectedness of a play by unnecessarily announcing the denouement before it begins. All writing, more especially poetry, is dramatic, and very much of all its interest depends upon curiosity. In addition to this besetting tendency, alike characteristic of Wordsworth and Bryant, is a prolixity in the opening sentences in many of his poems. Few poets can write simpler, closer English than Mr. Bryant, but mark how feeble is the commencement of a very fine poem:

"The time has been that these wild solitudes,
Yet beautiful as wild, were trod by me
Oftener than now; and when the ills of life
Had chafed my spirit—when the unsteady pulse
Beat with strange flutterings—I would wander forth
And seek the woods."

There is a homely phrase of "putting one's best leg foremost;" but our poet seems to take a delight in putting his dullest thought and feeblest verse at the porch of his otherwise fine structures of verse. We should advise the man who opened Bryant for the first time to plunge into the middle of each poem at once, and read right through to the end; it takes him a dozen lines to get warmed sufficient to go on with his theme. We now dismiss our objections on this score, and consider the brighter side of his poetical world.

In the opening lines to that beautiful composition called "The Burial Place," there is a piece of quiet painting very effective:

"Erewhile, on England's pleasant shores, our sires
Left not their churchyards unadorned with shades

Or blossoms; and indulgent to the strong
And natural dread of man's last home, the grave,
Its frost and silence—they disposed around,
To soothe the melancholy spirit that dwelt
Too sadly on life's close, the forms and hues
Of vegetable beauty. There the yew,
Green even amid the snows of winter, told
Of immortality, and gracefully
The willow, a perpetual mourner, drooped;
And there the gadding woodbine crept about,
And there the ancient ivy. From the spot
Where the sweet maiden, in her blossoming years
Cut off, was laid with streaming eyes, and hands
That trembled as they placed her there, the rose
Sprung modest, on bowed stalk, and better spoke
Her graces, than the proudest monument.
There children set about their playmate's grave
The pansy. On the infant's little bed,
Wet at its planting with maternal tears,
Emblem of early sweetness, early death,
Nestled the lowly primrose. Childless dames
And maids that would not raise the reddened eye—
Orphans, from whose young lids the light of joy
Fled early,—silent lovers, who had given
All that they lived for to the arms of earth,
Came often, o'er the recent graves to strew
Their offerings, rue, and rosemary, and flowers."

We were somewhat jarred at one expression in these lines—"of vegetable beauty"—it sounded strangely out of keeping.

As a diversion from these snatches of blank verse, let us quote a song.

"Soon as the glazed and gleaming snow
Reflects the day-dawn cold and clear,
The hunter of the west must go
In depth of woods to seek the deer.

"His rifle on his shoulder placed,
His stores of death arranged with skill,
His moccasins and snow-shoes laced,—
Why lingers he beside the hill?

"Far, in the dim and doubtful light,
Where woody slopes a valley leave,
He sees what none but lover might,
The dwelling of his Genevieve.

"And oft he turns his truant eye,
And pauses oft, and lingers near;
But when he marks the reddening sky,
He bounds away to hunt the deer."

We merely point out, as a singular trait in the compositions of so classical a writer as Mr. Bryant, the numerous expletive epithets he indulges in; he very often weakens the whole force of a thought by one needless or uncharacteristic adjective. We think this line an illustration of our remark:

"Soon as the glazed and gleaming snow."

The words "must go" also seem deficient in naturalness of expression.

As a specimen of graceful and elaborate writing few exceed "The Indian Girl's Lament."

"An Indian girl was sitting where
Her lover, slain in battle, slept;
Her maiden veil, her own black hair,
Came down o'er eyes that wept;
And wildly, in her woodland tongue,
This sad and simple lay she sung:

"'I've pulled away the shrubs that grew
Too close above thy sleeping head,
And broke the forest boughs that threw
Their shadows o'er thy bed,
That, shining from the sweet south-west,
The sunbeams might rejoice thy rest.

"'It was a weary, weary road
That led thee to the pleasant coast,
Where thou, in his serene abode,
Hast met thy father's ghost;
Where everlasting autumn lies
On yellow woods and sunny skies.

"'Twas I the broidered mocsen made,
That shod thee for that distant land;
'Twas I thy bow and arrows laid
Beside thy still cold hand;
Thy bow in many a battle bent,
Thy arrows never vainly sent.

"'With wampum belts I crossed thy breast,
And wrapped thee in the bison's hide,
And laid the food that pleased thee best,
In plenty, by thy side,
And decked thee bravely, as became
A warrior of illustrious name.

"'Thou'rt happy now, for thou hast passed
The long dark journey of the grave,
And in the land of light, at last,
Hast joined the good and brave;
Amid the flushed and balmy air,
The bravest and the loveliest there.

"'Yet, oft to thine own Indian maid
Even there thy thoughts will earthward stray,—
To her who sits where thou wert laid,
And weeps the hours away,
Yet almost can her grief forget
To think that thou dost love her yet.

"'And thou, by one of those still lakes
That in a shining cluster lie,
On which the south wind scarcely breaks
The image of the sky,
A bower for thee and me hast made
Beneath the many-colored shade.

"'And thou dost wait and watch to meet
My spirit sent to join the blessed,
And, wondering what detains my feet
From the bright land of rest,
Dost seem, in every sound, to hear
The rustling of my footsteps near."

In the "Old Man's Funeral" the moralizing mantle descends upon the poet, and he thus similitudes:

"I saw an aged man upon his bier,
His hair was thin and white, and on his brow

A record of the cares of many a year;—
Cares that were ended and forgotten now.
And there was sadness round, and faces bowed,
And woman's tears fell fast, and children wailed aloud.

"Then rose another hoary man and said,
In faltering accents, to that weeping train,
'Why mourn ye that our aged friend is dead?
Ye are not sad to see the gathered grain,
Nor when their mellow fruit the orchards cast,
Nor when the yellow woods shake down the ripened mast.

"'Ye sigh not when the sun, his course fulfilled,
His glorious course, rejoicing earth and sky,
In the soft evening, when the winds are stilled,
Sinks where his islands of refreshment lie,
And leaves the smile of his departure, spread,
O'er the warm-colored heaven and ruddy mountain head.'"

After working out the metaphor very elaborately, step by step, the aged mourner thus closes his homily over his dead brother:

"'And I am glad that he has lived thus long,
And glad that he has gone to his reward;
Nor can I deem that nature did him wrong,
Softly to disengage the vital cord.
For when his hand grew palsied, and his eye
Dark with the mists of age, it was his time to die.'"

All this is very noble writing, but surely it is somewhat too curiously considered, taking into account the scene; the speaker o'er-refines for nature.

There are times, however, when the moralizing mood is

thrown aside, and a snatch of pure song comes out. The Song of Wooing is gaily done; it is a double pleasure to meet Mr. Bryant in these moods:

"Dost thou idly ask to hear
At what gentle seasons
Nymphs relent, when lovers near,
Press the tenderest reasons?
Ah, they give their faith too oft
To the careless wooer;
Maidens' hearts are always soft,
Would that men's were truer!

"Woo the fair one, when around
Early birds are singing;
When, o'er all the fragrant ground
Early herbs are springing:
When the brookside, bank, and grove,
All with blossoms laden,
Shine with beauty, breathe of love,—
Woo the timid maiden.

"Woo her when, with rosy blush,
Summer eve is sinking;
When, on rills that softly gush,
Stars are softly winking;
When, through boughs that knit the bower,
Moonlight gleams are stealing;
Woo her, till the gentle hour
Wake a gentler feeling.

"Woo her, when autumnal dyes
Tinge the woody mountain;

When the dropping foliage lies
In the weedy fountain;
Let the scene, that tells how fast
Youth is passing over,
Warn her, ere her bloom is past,
To secure her lover.

"Woo her, when the north winds call
At the lattice nightly;
When, within the cheerful hall,
Blaze the fagots brightly;
While the wintry tempest round
Sweeps the landscape hoary,
Sweeter in her ear shall sound
Love's delightful story."

We feel sure no better plan can be laid for testing the powers of a poet than by comparing him with some brother bard. Let our readers study Bryant's "Address to a Cloud," commencing

"Beautiful cloud! with folds so soft and fair,
Swimming in the pure quiet air!
Thy fleeces bathed in sunlight, while below
Thy shadow o'er the vale moves slow;
Where, midst their labor, pause the reaper train
As cool it comes along the grain.
Beautiful cloud! I would I were with thee
In thy calm way o'er land and sea:
To rest on thy unrolling skirts, and look
On Earth as on an open book;
On streams that tie her realms with silver bands,
And the long ways that seam her lands;

And hear her humming cities and the sound
Of the great ocean breaking round.
Ay—I would sail upon thy air-borne car
To blooming regions distant far,
To where the sun of Andalusia shines
On his own olive-groves and vines,
Or the soft lights of Italy's bright sky
In smiles upon her ruins lie."

From this cloud let them step to Shelley's poem beginning

"I bring fresh showers to the fainting flowers."

This is, however, too well known to require quotation. Let our readers turn to it and judge for themselves. Let it, however, be fully borne in mind, once for all, that we never institute a comparison with any poet with an invidious intention; we despise that method of detraction. We merely do it to call out the idiosyncrasy of one poet by contrasting him with another. Indeed, they are intended as contrasts, and not as comparisons, in the strict sense of the word. Nature remains the same great and unchangeable being, while every poet is a mirror which flashes a different light upon this grand object.

The arrogant assumption of the world ignores or despises the existence of a single human being. We read the birth of this, and the death of that, with a composure perfectly icy. But the man of thought or feeling regards it in a very different light. With every babe born is its accompanying universe; to every man dead the universe as it seemed to him has passed away like a forgotten dream. We defy the veriest fool to overrate a birth or a death. The disappearance of a star or the advent of

a comet is considered as an object of special wonder; what would be said if we were told that all the stars of heaven had flashed their last, and that one peculiar aspect of creation had perished! In no two men has nature had the same voice, and the same look. She has a tone and a glance exclusive to every one, from Adam to the last of his birth; like a fascinating beauty she has her crowd of lovers; each is received into her secret bower—each is deluded she is his own, and under this delusion the poet, philosopher, peer, ploughboy, and felon dies. All know that she smiles on all. Yet to every one is given the belief that she prizes him as her own beloved one. This is the egotism of man. On that consoling pillow he gathers strength in the dark night of the world's reproach, to baffle his enemies on the morrow.

The veriest tyro in logic will at once perceive that our estimate of a poet is somewhat analogous to the old idea of a prophet, for if we place so great a numeral value on a man, it is evident our reverence for the sublimation of a man is great in proportion.

To Mr. Bryant, therefore, we assign the position of a mirror in which all history and humanity, as well as physical nature, are reflected as they appear to him. Thus we claim for every man as important a vocation in time, as we are taught by Christ to demand for him in Eternity. That divine teacher has said, "What shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" And then he confirms all by saying, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" As the soul of every one includes the whole universe, the importance is at once self-evident.

In "The Lapse of Time," Bryant seems to take for granted part of our theory, for he says:

"Lament who will, in fruitless tears,
The speed with which our moments fly:
I sigh not over vanished years,
But watch the years that hasten by.
* * * *
"The future!—cruel were the power,
Whose doom would tear thee from my heart.
Thou sweetener of the present hour!
We cannot—no—we will not part!"
* * * *

Immediately after comes a natural reflection.

"Thou fliest and bearest away our woe,
And as thy shadowy train depart,
The memory of sorrow grows
A lighter burden on the heart."

In the "Forest Hymn," we see a better system at work. Instead of a needless introduction, the poet at once opens boldly and truly into the subject.

"The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them,—ere he framed
The lofty vault to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences

Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the grey old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised? Let me, at least,
Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn—thrice happy, if it find
Acceptance in His ear."

Then, however, comes the supererogation we so often have complained of:

"Father, thy hand
Hath reared these venerable columns, thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun,
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze,
And shot towards heaven. The century-living crow,
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches, till, at last, they stood,
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold
Communion with his Maker."

All this was surely implied in the foregoing, and had already passed through the reader's mind.

In the later poems we do not see much advance on his earlier effusions. The same calm spirit looking on men, not as one of them fighting in the throng of battle, giving and receiving blows, but on an eminence, where, above the smoke of the conflict and the tumult of the conflict, he can see as a spectator: removed from the turmoil, he can draw his conclusions.

In his verses "To the Apennines," he combines the ideal of paradise with the locale of Peru.

"Your peaks are beautiful, ye Apennines!
In the soft light of these serenest skies;
From the broad highland region, black with pines,
Fair as the hills of Paradise they rise,
Bathed in the tint Peruvian slaves behold
In rosy flushes on the virgin gold."

This is another proof how much some poets *feel* with the *brain*. Reflection here has yoked the dissimilar. We must confess that we had hoped for a more personal, humanizing conclusion, than the frigid summing up of—

"In you the heart that sighs for freedom seeks
Her image; there the winds no barrier know,
Clouds come and rest and leave your fairy peaks;
While even the immaterial Mind, below,
And Thought, her winged offspring, chained by power,
Pine silently for the redeeming hour."

Mr. Bryant very seldom originates his subject; he generally selects some well-known fact, and after amplifying it, he then closes his poem by drawing a moral. That there is a moral in

everything we need no instructor to assure us; but as this propensity to point it out seems part of our poet's nature, we must not blame him for it. We may, however, be permitted to express our opinion, that it very greatly interferes with his immortality as a master of song. In his "Death of Schiller," we have his method of teaching by verse very fairly set down.

"'Tis said, when Schiller's death drew nigh,
The wish possessed his mighty mind
To wander forth wherever lie
The homes and haunts of human-kind.

"Then strayed the poet, in his dreams,
By Rome and Egypt's ancient graves;
Went up the New World's forest streams,
Stood in the Hindoo's temple-caves;

"Walked with the Pawnee, fierce and stark,
The sallow Tartar, midst his herds,
The peering Chinese, and the dark
False Malay uttering gentle words.

"How could he rest? even then he trod
The threshold of the world unknown;
Already, from the seat of God,
A ray upon his garments shone;

"Shone and awoke the strong desire,
For love and knowledge reached not here,
Till, freed by death, his soul of fire
Sprang to a fairer, ampler sphere.

"Then—who shall tell how deep, how bright
The abyss of glory opened round?
How thought and feeling flowed like light,
Through ranks of being without bound?"

In his lines to the memory of William Leggett, we have a verse which gives a felicitous acconnt of the manner in which impulsive poetry should be written.

"The words of fire that from his pen
Were flung upon the fervent page,
Still move, still shake the hearts of men,
Amid a cold and coward age."

And his power of personification at times comes out in bold and broad relief.

"Oh FREEDOM! thou art not, as poets dream,
A fair young girl, with light and delicate limbs,
And wavy tresses gushing from the cap
With which the Roman master crowned his slave
When he took off the gyves. A bearded man,
Armed to the teeth, art thou; one mailed hand
Grasps the broad shield, and one the sword; thy brow,
Glorious in beauty though it be, is scarred
With tokens of old wars; thy massive limbs
Are strong with struggling. Power at thee has launched
His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten thee;
They could not quench the life thou hast from heaven.
Merciless power has dug thy dungeon deep,
And his swart armorers, by a thousand fires,
Have forged thy chain; yet, while he deems thee bound,
The links are shivered, and the prison walls

Fall outward; terribly thou springest forth,
As springs the flame above a burning pile,
And shoutest to the nations, who return
Thy shoutings, while the pale oppressor flies."

In the piece entitled "Seventy-Six" there is a force of diction which rings out loud and clear.

"What heroes from the woodland sprung,
When, through the fresh awakened land,
The thrilling cry of freedom rung,
And to the work of warfare strung
The yeoman's iron hand.

"Hills flung the cry to hills around,
And ocean-mart replied to mart,
And streams, whose springs were yet unfound,
Pealed far away the startling sound
Into the forest's heart.

"Then marched the brave from rocky steep,
From mountain river swift and cold;
The borders of the stormy deep,
The vales where gathered waters sleep,
Sent up the strong and bold,—

As if the very earth again
Grew quick with God's creating breath,
And, from the sods of grove and glen,
Rose ranks of lion-hearted men
To battle to the death.

"The wife, whose babe first smiled that day,
The fair fond bride of yestereve,
And aged sire and matron grey,

Saw the loved warriors haste away,
And deemed it sin to grieve.

"Already had the strife begun;
Already blood on Concord's plain
Along the springing grass had run.
And blood had flowed at Lexington,
Like brooks of April rain.

"That death-stain on the vernal sward
Hallowed to freedom all the shore;
In fragments fell the yoke abhorred—
The footstep of a foreign lord
Profaned the soil no more."

Mr. Bryant has certainly the rare merit of having written a stanza which will bear comparison with any four lines in our recollection. The thought is complete, the expression perfect. A poem of a dozen such verses would be like a row of pearls, each above a king's ransom. A sermon could be preached from such a text as the following. Let every reader commit it to heart, and when battered down by the sudden blow of a deliberate falsehood, let him repeat it to himself, and live on with unabated heart.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again:
The Eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers."

This verse has always read to us as one of the noblest in the English language.

"The Disinterred Warrior" is probably his best poem, considering its length.

> "Gather him to his grave again,
> And solemnly and *softly* lay,
> Beneath the verdure of the plain,
> The warrior's scattered bones away."

As we regard Mr. Bryant as infinitely the most classical poet of the western world, he must pardon our objecting to the needless epithet of "*softly*," in the second line of this otherwise fine verse. There is a mincing step in its sound which spoils the effect of the previous one of "solemnly." "Solemn and soft" do not harmonize well, either in poetry or in prose. The idea is complete without. The next stanza is confirmatory of our opinion.

> "Pay the deep reverence taught of old,
> The homage of man's heart to *Death!*
> *Nor dare to trifle with the mould*
> *Once hallowed by the Almighty's breath.*
>
> "*The soul hath quickened every part,*—
> That remnant of a martial brow,—
> Those ribs, that held the mighty heart,
> That strong arm—strong no longer now!"

The last verse is only a dilution of the two preceding lines. It is another proof of how frequently Bryant weakens a noble metaphor by a needless elaboration. Not content, however, with the bold, graphic force of his first expression, he elongates it till the force is considerably impaired.

"Spare them—each mouldering relic spare,
Of God's own image: let them rest,
Till not a trace shall speak of where
The awful likeness was impressed."

There is more of curious thought than truth or simplicity in the following, although it has been highly praised by some critics.

"For he was fresher from the hand
That formed of earth the human face,
And to the elements did stand
In nearer kindred than our race."

We repeat, that there is more of "fancy" than "truth" in this stanza. We do not see the natural force of Mr Bryant saying that, being born a century ago, brings us nearly related to either fire, air, earth, or water. This is, in our humble opinion, a very false species of poetry,

"In many a flood to madness tost,
In many a storm has been his path,
He hid him not from heat or frost,
But met them, and defied their wrath."

* * * * * *

But we must forgive this probable error when we remember these lines.

"The stars looked forth to teach his way,
The still earth warned him of the foe."

To those who know the nature of a Red Indian these two lines are perfect in their portraiture. Even to us, an Englishman, we

feel the force and beauty of the description, but then we confess to a long and careful study of Cooper, the best substitute for nature. While these sheets have been passing through the press, we have observed how inadequately we have expressed our admiration of this great novelist's scenes from nature. We lately met one who had been a dweller in the woods, and a roamer over the prairies of this magnificent country, and he declared that next to having been in those scenes was the study of Cooper. He concluded by declaring that Mr. Irving's description of the prairie was a mere "pic-nic" account of an amateur visit; if we are wrong here, the American public will very properly correct us.

To return to Mr. Bryant. How gloriously the poet recovers himself, and throws his whole force into the concluding verse.

"A noble race, but they are gone,
With their old forests wide and deep,
And we have built our homes upon
Fields where their generations sleep.
Their fountains slake our thirst at noon,
Upon their fields our harvest waves,
Our lovers woo beneath their moon—
Ah! let us spare at least their graves!"

We cannot resist the temptation of quoting two stanzas from "The Lapse of Time," merely to avow our firm conviction in the truth of the prophecy.

"The years, that o'er each sister land,
Shall lift the country of my birth
And nurse her strength—till she shall stand
The pride and pattern of the earth!

"Till younger commonwealths for aid
Shall cling about her ample robe,
And from her frown shall shrink afraid
The crowned oppressors of the globe!"

It may be safely predicated, by any one accustomed to look philosophically at the movements of time, that it is reserved for the American republic to shield her great parent, England herself, from the assaults of the old despotisms.

From this historical glance into the future, let us turn to a pleasant page in Mr. Bryant's present. It is a short description of an American nymph.

"Oh! fairest of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
Were all that met thy infant eye.
Thy sports—thy wanderings—when a child,
Were ever in the sylvan wild:
And all the beauty of the place
Is in thy heart, and in thy face.
The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks;
Thy step is in the wind that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves;
Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herbs that look
On their young figures in the brook."

We cannot help breaking off, in this otherwise beautiful poem, to remark that unfortunate taste which compelled Mr.

Bryant to spoil the fine natural effect of his entire poem, by comparing a lady's eyelashes into herbs hanging down Narcissus-like, and admiring themselves in the "gutta serena" of her own eyes. As usual, however, he rallies, and winds up the whole poem nobly and appropriately.

"The forest depths, by foot unprest,
Are not more sinless than thy breast:
The holy peace that fills the air
Of those calm solitudes is there."

The companion picture to the American maiden of Bryant is Wordsworth's beautiful verses to the English wife. A poet seldom succeeds when he praises one of his own family, but here Mrs. Wordsworth has inspired the poet of Rydal. These are well known to be addressed to his wife.

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM.

"She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

"I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free

And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

"And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command:
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light."

In our foregoing extracts we have endeavored to illustrate every opinion and observation we have made by characteristic extracts from the poet's writing. It is impossible to rise from the study of Mr. Bryant's poems without feeling more in harmony with nature and man than the spirit generally feels. We know that we have been calmly, kindly reasoned with by a good, calm, sad, Christian man, who, having no turbulence in himself, endeavors to throw the quiet mantle of his own reflective spirit over his companions.

He looks upon nature with the platonic admiration of a sage, and not with the disturbing passion of a lover; he feels towards all visible beauty more as a friend than as a wooer, and in this spirit realizes the thought of Shakspeare:

"Happy is your grace
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune
Into so quiet and so sweet a style!"

He looks upon the physical world as a storehouse of moral reflection, calculated to make us wiser and better men, and considers his fellow-creatures more as creatures to be reasoned into virtue and submission, than to be roused into exertion against evil, or to be tamed into the recognition of a supreme good. In a word, he finds

"Books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything!"

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

The author of "Fanny" possesses many qualities calculated to make him a popular poet; he also has one or two which may, as time rolls on, peril his existence as part of the enduring national literature of America.

He has fancy, versification, a keen eye for the incongruous, and a taste for the beautiful; but against these gifts must be set off his want of earnestness. We are never certain he feels his subject; he writes about it well and wittily; and in some of his poems he displays a truthfulness and depth worthy of any poet, but the mood seems to pass away, and he becomes the Mephistophilean jester at the various passions and pursuits of the world. This is a mind which is not calculated to produce a solid impression on the public; they require a breadth and depth in the treatment of a subject which are incompatible with its nature. It requires a poet of great and varied powers, like Byron, to achieve a permanent reputation without this truthfulness of intellect; it may be said that even the author of "Childe Harold" has not stood the critical test. Many poets

have been famous in their time, and even in the generation after them, and yet have been negatived by posterity.

The secret of Byron's success in "Don Juan" lies in that love of unexpectedness which is so constituent a part of human nature. However absurd and dangerous a practical joke may be, it invariably draws forth a laugh from the majority. In this mixed style of poetry there is a kind of intellectual contradiction, which in some shape approximates to the same habit of mind.

In addition to this feature in the human character, Byron made an appeal to the beautiful and the heroic. "Don Juan" not only abounds with passages which apparently ignore the existence of all love, truth, devotion, and the better parts of our nature, but also with the finest appeals to these very elements. These are too numerous to need enumeration; a rapid glance at the poem will convince the most sceptical. There is also another attraction in this kind of writing, and it consists in the easiness with which some piquant lines are remembered by reason of the double and generally felicitous rhymes.

We shall, however, commence with Mr. Halleck's shorter poems, and close our notice with a short analysis of his chief production called "Fanny." As he has written very little verse, we shall try him by a more careful standard than that applied to men of more extensive productions. Nor is this unjust on other grounds. There is an evident polish about his lines; the first glance shows the elaborate care with which every thought has been expressed; there is not much of that "abandon" which characterizes some poets.

We are not quite sure whether Mr. Halleck intends the

verses in "Red Jacket" to be complimentary to Mr. Cooper or not; some suppose there is a gentle sarcasm on the great novelist's national egotism.

"Cooper, whose name is with his country's woven,
First in her files her Pioneer of mind,
A wanderer now in other climes, has proven
His love for the young land he left behind.

* * * * *

"And faithful to the act of Congress quoted
As law authority—it passed 'nem. con.;'
He writes that we are, as ourselves have voted,
The most enlightened people ever known.

"That all our week is happy as a Sunday
In Paris, full of song, and dance, and laugh,
And that from Orleans to the Bay of Fundy,
There's not a bailiff or an epitaph.

And furthermore, in fifty years or sooner,
We shall export our poetry and wine,
And our brave fleet, eight frigates and a schooner,
Will sweep the seas from Zembla to the line."

There are somewhere about half-a-dozen more verses, but they are not written with the poet's usual felicity.

This inconsistency of mood betrays itself in most of Mr. Halleck's productions. Byron had the power to check this feeling. When he wrote a Mephistophilean poem he openly worked it out; in his serious productions he never suffered this disturbing, inharmonious spirit, to appear. He was too much of an artist to do this. But his American brother in verse seems to be governed by this mood, and not to rule it.

In the verses to "Alnwick Castle" we have an instance of this besetting sin. To be sure, the author may turn round and say that he meant it should assume this bantering tone, but there is an instinct in every reader which tells him how far such a purpose is legitimate. In "Beppo" and "Don Juan" we feel the whole work is in keeping, but in "Alnwick Castle" we only observe the poet's infirmity of purpose. We feel pretty well convinced that Mr. Halleck intended to write a serious heroic poem, when he commenced the lines in question, but finding his impulse or inspiration dying, he resuscitated it by calling upon the Genius of Banter. Notwithstanding this centaur-like appearance, it possesses some fine stanzas.

"Home of the Percies' high-born race,
Home of their beautiful and brave,
Alike their birth and burial-place,
Their cradle and their grave.

"Still sternly o'er the castle-gate
Their house's lion stands in state,
As in his proud departed hours:
And warriors frown in stone on high,
And feudal banners flout the sky
Above his princely towers.

"A gentle hill its side inclines,
Lovely in England's fadeless green,
To meet one quiet stream which winds
Through this romantic scene.

"As silently and sweetly still
As when at evening on that hill,
While summer's winds blow soft and low,

Seated at gallant Hotspur's side,
His Katharine was a happy bride,
A thousand years ago.

"Gaze on the abbey's ruined pile;
Does not the succoring Ivy, keeping
Her watch around it seem to smile,
As o'er a loved one sleeping.
One solitary turret grey
Still tells, in melancholy glory,
The legend of the Cheviot day,
The Percy's proudest border story.

"That day its roof was triumph's arch;
Then rang from aisle to pictured dome
The light step of the soldier's march,
The music of the trump and drum.
And babe and sire, the old and young,
And the manly hymn and minstrel's song,
And woman's pure kiss, sweet and long,
Welcomed her warrior home.

* * * * * *

After two or three more stanzas, written in the same spirit, the jeering fiend comes over Mr. Halleck, and he breaks off thus:

"I wandered through the lofty halls,
Trod by the Percies of old fame,
And traced upon the chapel's walls
Each high, heroic name.
From him who once his standard set,
Where now o'er mosque or minaret

Glitter the Sultan's crescent moons,
To him who when a younger son
Fought for King George at Lexington,
A major of dragoons!"

Was the temptation of rhyming "dragoons" to "moons" too strong for the poet, or did his American indignation, to find a Percy against the cause of freedom, in the old war, dissipate the chivalric vision?

When we read this for the first time, we were under the momentary impression that we had got hold of, by mistake, "The Rejected Addresses," so like a parody on Sir Walter Scott did the verses sound:

To proceed, however, with Mr. Halleck's own account of the matter, he says:

"The last half stanza: it has dashed
From my warm lips the sparkling cup,
The light that o'er my eye-beam flashed,
The power that bore my spirit up,
Above this bank-note world is gone,
And Alnwick's but a market town,
And this, alas! its market day,
And beasts and borderers throng the way,
Oxen and bleating lambs in lots,
Northumbrian boors and plaided Scots,
Men in the coal and cattle line,
From Teviot's bard and hero land,
From royal Berwick's beach of sand,
From Wooller, Morpeth, Hexam, and
Newcastle upon Tyne."

* * * * * *

The poet concludes this address to the Home of the Percies:

"You'll ask if yet the Percy lives
In the armed pomp of feudal state?
The present representatives
Of Hotspur and the gentle Kate,
Are some half-dozen serving men,
In the drab coat of William Penn;
A chambermaid whose lip, and eye,
And cheek, and brown hair, bright and curling,
Spoke nature's aristocracy,
And one, half-groom, half-seneschal,
Who bowed me through the court, bower, hall,
From donjon-keep to turret wall,
For ten and six pence sterling."

As a proof of the fire with which Halleck treats a congenial theme, we quote some verses from his Marco Bozzaris. This brave warrior fell in an attack on the Turkish camp, during the Grecian war for independence, in 1823. The opening is full of spirit and beauty.

"At midnight in his guarded tent,
The Turk was dreaming of the hour
When Greece her knee in suppliance bent
Should tremble at his power.
In dreams through camp and court he bore
The trophies of a conqueror.
In dreams his song of triumph heard;
Then wore his monarch's signet ring!
Then prest that monarch's throne—a king!
As wild his thoughts, and gay of wing,
As Eden's garden bird."

As a contrast to this supine security, the following stanza is artistically brought in. It introduces the hero with fine effect:

"At midnight, in the forest shades,
Bozzaris ranged his Suliote band,
True as the steel of their tried blades,
Heroes in heart and hand.
There had the Persian's thousands stood,
There had the glad earth drank their blood
On old Platæa's day:
And now they breathed that haunted air,
The sons of sires who conquered there,
With arm to strike, and soul to dare,
As quick, as far as they.

"An hour past on: the Turk awoke,
That bright dream was his last.
He woke—to hear his sentries shriek,
'To arms! they come! the Greek! the Greek!'
He woke—to die midst flame and smoke,
And shot, and groan, and sabre stroke,
And death-shots falling thick and fast.
As lightnings from the mountain-cloud,
And heard, with voice as trumpet loud,
Bozzaris cheer his band:
Strike! till the last armed foe expires;
Strike! for your altars and your fires;
Strike! for the green graves of your sires,
God, and your native land!
They fought, like brave men, long and well;
They filled the ground with Moslem slain;
They conquered—but Bozzaris fell,
Bleeding at every vein.

His few surviving comrades saw
His smile when rang their proud hurrah,
And the red field was won:
Then saw in death his eyelids close,
Calmly, as to a night's repose,
Like flowers at set of sun.
Bozzaris! with the storied brave,
Greece mustered in her glory's time,
Rest thee; there is no prouder grave,
Even in her own proud clime.
She wore no funeral weeds for thee,
Nor bade the dark hearse wave its plume,
Like torn branch from death's leafless tree,
In sorrow's pomp and pageantry,
The heartless luxury of the tomb!
But she remembers thee as one
Long-loved and for a season gone.
For thee her poet's lyre is wreathed—
Her marble wrought—her music breathed—
For thee she rings the birthday bells,
Of thee her babes first lisping tells;
For thine her evening prayer is said,
At palace-couch and cottage-bed:
Her soldier, closing with the foe,
Gives for thy sake a deadlier blow.
Her plighted maiden when she fears
For him, the joy of her young years,
Thinks of thy fate, and checks her tears.
And she the mother of thy boys,
Though in her eye and faded cheek
Is read the grief she will not speak,
The memory of her hundred joys,

And even she who gave thee birth,
Will by their pilgrim circled hearth,
  Talk of thy doom without a sigh:
For thou art Freedom's now and Fame's,
One of the few, the immortal names,
  That were not born to die."

The close of this fine poem is worthy of Collins. There is a slight want of arrangement in the images, but they are well wrought up. The idea of his personal influence reaching through the various channels of action by way of retribution, is poetically conceived and beautifully executed.

The poem in which Mr. Halleck shines most brightly is that "To Burns." It is not unworthy to stand by the side of Wordsworth's on the same subject. There is a condensation of thought, and a vigorous simplicity of style in this production, which is not often reached by a modern poet. They are too fond of elaboration and carrying out their idea. When this is done, the author has two risks:—One is that he over-refines and wearies the reader, or presses him to deny his aptness of selection.

In sentimental and moralizing poetry, we do not think Mr. Halleck very successful. There is a feebleness of idea and diction, which contrasts strongly with his poems on "Burns" and "Marco Bozzaris."

Twilight has been a favorite subject with most bards, and many have produced on the mind that particular sensation which may be presumed to rest upon nature at that calm hour. There is a charm in the very sound of the word, which throws an atmosphere around us. Gray has produced a corresponding effect on the reader's mind at the commencement of his far-

famed Elegy. Collins, also, in his matchless ode to "Evening" has been equally successful. It is a pleasant study to select some of the best poems of these fine writers, and examine how appropriate and suggestive is every epithet they employ. Collins is wonderfully pure and exact. We are aware that many object to Gray's adjectives on account of some appearing as mere expletives. We have never perceived this; but, while admitting an occasional pedantry in a phrase or two, we have always admired his nicety of taste. Indeed, the impression left on our mind is a fastidiousness which is carried to an ultra point.

Wordsworth, in like manner, has, by a few lines, thrown the spell of poetic power over the reader's attention.

Mr. Halleck is, in our opinion, deficient in this faculty. There is a feeling of artificiality about most of his sentimental verses, having reference to the outward aspect of nature. Many of his epithets seem placed in after the verse was written. They do not seem natural, nor born on the spot: they are emigrants from some foreign thought, and not natives.

We will quote a part of his "Twilight."

"There is an evening twilight of the heart,
When its wild passion waves are lulled to rest,
And the eye sees life's fairy scenes depart,
As fades the day-beam in the rosy west!

"'Tis with a nameless feeling of regret
We gaze upon them as they melt away,
And fondly would we bid them linger yet,
But Hope is round us with her angel lay

Hailing afar some happier moonlight hour,
Dear are her whispers still, though lost their early power."

"In youth her cheek was crimsoned with her glow;
Her smile was loveliest then; her matin song
Was heaven's own music, and the note of woe
Was all unheard *her sunny bowers among*."

This line is an evidence of the poet's suffering the necessity of a rhyme to spoil a fine line. How much better would it have read thus:

"Was all unheard among her sunny bowers!"

A finished poet should not suffer himself to be conquered even in the minutiæ of his art.

"Life's little world of bliss was newly born;
We knew not—cared not—it was born to die;
Flushed with the cool breeze, and the dews of morn,
With dancing heart we gazed on the pure sky,
And mocked the passing clouds that dimmed its blue,
Like our own sorrows then, as fleeting and as few."

It is difficult to realize that these were written by the author of the former quotations.

As a proof of what may be done by a few simple lines, we quote a passage from Wordsworth's "Hartleap Well."

"The trees were grey with neither arms nor head;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
'Here in old time the hand of man hath been.'

"I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey,

It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And nature here were willing to decay.
* * * * *
"The pleasure house is dust;—behind, before,
This is no common waste—no common gloom;
But nature in due course of time once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

"She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

"One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride,
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

The grown man and the child must alike admire the simple dignity of these verses. There are a simplicity and power about them which convince all of the presence of the true poet. Mr. Halleck would do well to study a simpler style in his moralizing poems. We have been disappointed that he has not attempted the lighter, gayer kind of lyric, the song. From one or two parodies in "Fanny," and from the spirit of most of his poetry, we feel assured he would have been eminently successful in this charming department of the Muses. While we are on the subject of songs, we cannot help paying a tribute of admiration to the compositions of General Morris. They are the most delightful of modern chansons. As we shall treat of him more at length in our next volume, we hope to confirm our hasty eulogium here expressed by appropriate passages.

Having alluded to the poem on Burns, we offer a few verses to illustrate the peculiarities of Mr. Halleck's style of composition.

We shall select a few stanzas written with a vigor worthy of the great Scotchman.

"The memory of Burns—a name
That calls—when brimmed her festal cup,
A nation's glory and her shame
In silent sadness up.

"A nation's glory—be the rest
Forgot; she's canonized his mind:
And it is joy to speak the best
We may of human kind.

* * * * *

"His is that language of the heart,
In which the answering heart would speak,
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light the cheek.

* * * * *

"What sweet tears dim the eyes unshed,
What wild vows falter on the tongue,
When 'Scots wha hae with Wallace bled,'
Or 'Auld Lang Syne' is sung!

* * * * *

"And when he breathes his master lay,
Of Alloway's witch-haunted wall,
All passions in our frames of clay,
Come thronging at his call.

"Imagination's world of air,
And our own world, its gloom and glee,

Wit, pathos, poetry are there,
And death's sublimity."

It is cheering to find a poet speak boldly of a fellow bard, even though he was not the pattern of a man "after a bishop's own heart."

"And Burns—though brief the race he ran,
Though rough and dark the path he trod,
Lived—died—in form and soul a man,
The image of his God!
* * * * *
"Strong sense, deep feeling, passions strong,
A hate of tyrant and of knave,
A love of right, a scorn of wrong,
Of coward and of slave.
* * * * *
"Praise to the bard! his words are driven,
Like flower seeds by the far winds sown,
Where'er beneath the sky of heaven,
The birds of fame have flown.

"Praise to the man!—a nation stood
Beside his coffin with wet eyes,
Her brave—her beautiful—her good,
As when a loved one dies.
* * * * *
"Such graves as his are pilgrim shrines,
Shrines to no creed or code confined,
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Mecca's of the mind."

We are afraid that the pharisees of this republic, like their fellow hypocrites of the Old Country, have no more faith in

truth, or reverence for poets or prophets, than had their Jewish forefathers, who cried out, "Crucify him,"—"Release unto us Barabbas,"—more especially if the modern Barabbas were a millionaire.

It is seldom that a modern touches the Latin harp with any degree of success. We were therefore agreeably surprised with Halleck's verses to the Field of Grounded Arms.

"Strangers! your eyes are on that valley fixed
Intently, as we gaze on vacancy,
When the mind's wings o'erspread
The spirit world of dreams!

"True, 'tis a scene of loveliness; the bright
Green dwelling of the summer's first-born hours,
Whose wakened leaf and bud
Are welcoming the morn."

The next verse is very sweet, notwithstanding a kind of halt in the first line.

"The song of the wild bird is on the wind,
The hum of the wild bee—the music wild
Of waves upon the bank,
Of leaves upon the bough."

Such is the prejudice of custom that a critic of some classical taste refused to allow any merit to this poem, and quoted with great energy Horace's ode:

"Quis multâ gracilis te puer in rosâ,
Perfusus liquidis urget odoribus
Grata Pyrrha sub antro?
Cui flavam religas comam
Simplex munditiis!—"

The author of "Paracelsus" had a favorite theory to account for the slowness with which contemporaries acknowledge the merit of any superior mind. He declared his firm conviction, that it partly rose from envy and partly from the meanness of the masses, who could not realize the fact of a schoolfellow or companion rising so much above themselves. When, however, the man is too great for any doubt, then the acquaintances applaud the decision to the very echo, in order to elevate themselves into a spurious vain-glory, as they to a certain extent share his fame, being his intimates. These self-satisfied toadies are to a man of genius most terrible and deadly enemies: they deal in dark inuendoes, and spit their venom on all who are above them.

To return to Halleck.

"But all is song and beauty in the land,
Beneath her skies of June; then journey on,
A thousand scenes like this
Will greet you ere the eve."

* * *

These lines are full of force and pith:

"Land where he learned to lisp a mother's name,
The first beloved in life, the last forgot;
Land of his frolic youth;
Land of his bridal eve;
Land of his children—vain your columned strength,
Invaders!—vain your battle's steel and fire,
Choose ye the morrow's doom—
A prison or a grave!"

As an instance of Mr. Halleck's incongruities, we quote a characteristic stanza from another of his poems:

"Youth's coffin! hush, the tale it tells,
Be silent, memory's funeral bells!
Lone in one heart, her home, it dwells
Untold till death,
And where the grave mound greenly swells
O'er buried faith."

After two more verses, alluding to the revolutions in empires, we come to this finale:

"Empires to-day are upside down,
The castle kneels before the town,
The monarch fears a printer's frown,
A brickbat's range:
Give me, in preference to a crown,
Five shillings change!"

Surely, it is unworthy to mar a fine subject by such an old joke. It scarcely seems credible that so poor a verse could have slipped in even by accident.

These are sweetly said:

"A poet's daughter—dearer word
Lip hath not spoke, nor listener heard;
Fit theme for song of bee and bird,
From morn till even,
And wind harp by the breathing stirred
Of star-lit heaven.

"My spirit's wings are weak—the fire
Poetic comes but to expire;
Her name needs not my humble lyre
To bid it live:
She hath already from her sire
All bard can give."

The whole of the poem from which we have quoted these lines is very peculiar, and shows how very small a temptation it takes to lead our poet astray.

We shall give a few specimens from his longest poem, but by no means his most successful. It is certainly a light and graceful collection of pleasantly expressed odds and ends of thought, but its entire want of story is fatal.

"I've felt full many a heartache in my day,
At the mere rustling of a muslin gown,
And caught some dreadful colds, I blush to say,
While shivering in the shade of beauty's frown,
They say her smiles are sunbeams—it may be—
But never a sunbeam would she throw on me.

* * * * *

"Her father kept, some fifteen years ago,
A retail dry good shop in Chatham street,
And nursed his little earnings, sure though slow,
Till having mustered wherewithal to meet
The gaze of the great world—he breathed the air
Of Pearl street, and set up in Hanover square.

"Money is power—'t is said—I never tried;
I 'm but a poet—and bank-notes to me
Are curiosities, as closely eyed,
Whene'er I get them, as a stone would be
Passed from the moon, on Dr. Mitchell's table,
Or classic brickbat from the tower of Babel!"

The sudden investment of wit which the crowd discover in a wealthy man is well described.

"—brilliant traits of mind,
And genius, clear and countless as the dies

Upon the peacock's plumage; taste refined,
Wisdom and wit were his—perhaps much more.
'T was strange they had not found it out before!"

There is always, however, something to be said on the wrong as well as on the right side of the question, and there is a foundation of truth for every prejudice, nay, for even every error. The world is a shrewd beast, and knows well that a poor man who raises himself to wealth has some faculties in him superior to them. It is not because the man is rich that they listen, it is because they feel he knows more than they do. Before he achieved his wealth they knew not his power. He rises to a loftier station, and consequently has earned the right to speak, and to be listened to with attention.

We do not make this defence out of any affection for the opinion of a rich man *per se*, but out of a desire that every question should be fairly tested.

It may, certainly, on the other hand be argued, that the possession of the wealth had no real influence on the man's intellect, and that his remarks must have been as brilliant before his money-making as after; but even here it may be said, "that nothing gives one so much confidence as gold, and nothing allows a freer play for the mind than confidence." We will illustrate this by an anecdote we were told the other evening, by a clergyman whose knowledge of human nature is more extensive than generally falls to that class.

A poor parson was in the habit every Saturday of borrowing of a friend a five dollar note; this was invariably returned, with wonderful punctuality, early every Monday morning. What astonished the lender more than all, was, the singular fact, that

he was always repaid in the very same bill he lent. Being a very curious man, this puzzled him amazingly. He felt sure that the parson could not want the money for household expenses, because the note was never changed. After a time, he resolved to seize the first opportunity of begging for an explanation of so unaccountable a proceeding. Shortly after, the parson himself came on Saturday evening, and asked for the loan of a ten dollar note. His friend seized the opportunity of demanding the solution of the mystery. After a pause, the borrower said: "You must know, my dear Smith, that my income is so small that I never have at the end of the week one cent I can call my own. Now, some cannot preach or pray on an empty stomach: I am one who cannot do so on an empty pocket. When I have nothing in them I feel a poor, miserable devil, and afraid to look my congregation in the face, much less to denounce their wickedness; but with a five dollar bill in my pocket, I feel a man and a Christian, and I preach with great eloquence and force. Now, as the President is coming to hear me to-morrow, I intend to try the effect of the double money power, and I shall feel obliged by your lending me a ten dollar bill to put in my pocket for this grand occasion!"

Absurd as this sounds when reduced to a confession, it is the undoubted truth, and is the foundation of every rich man's arrogance, and every poor man's despondency.

Despite the desultory writing of this poem, there are scattered here and there some beautiful thoughts, tenderly expressed.

"There are some happy moments in this lone
And desolate world of ours, that well repay

The toil of struggling through it—and atone
For many a long, sad night, and weary day.
They come upon the mind like some wild air
Of distant music, when we know not where,

"Or whence, the sounds are brought from, and their power,
Though brief, is boundless. That far, future home,
Oft dreamed of, beckons near—its rose-wreathed bower,
And cloudless skies before us. We become
Changed in an instant—all gold leaf and gilding.
This is, in vulgar phrase, called 'castle building.'"

Now and then he has a sly hit at a brother author:

"*Dear to the exile is his native land,*
In memory's twilight beauty seen afar:
Dear to the broker is a note of hand
Collaterally secured—the polar star
Is dear at midnight to the sailor's eyes,
And dear are Bristed's volumes at half price.

* * * * *

"Brokers of all grades—stock and farm—and Jews
Of all religions, who at noonday form
On 'Change, that brotherhood the moral muse
Delights in, when the heart is pure and warm,
And each exerts his intellectual force
To cheat his neighbor—legally of course.

* * * * *

—for many bosom friends, it seems,
Did borrow of him, and sometimes forget
To pay—indeed, they have not paid him yet.

"But these he deemed as trifles—when each mouth
Was open in his praise, and plaudits rose

Upon his willing ear, like the sweet south
Upon a bank of violets, from those
Who knew his talent, riches, and so forth;
That is, knew how much money he was worth!"

Moore himself must smile at the parody on his well known song of

"There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,

but the American poet's

"There's a barrel of porter at Tammany Hall,"

is too well known to need quoting. It is certainly a capital specimen of that species of verse. Mr. Halleck sometimes makes the same sound rhyme a couplet. In the course of a few stanzas we meet with these:

XCIV.

"And never has a summer morning smiled
Upon a lovelier scene, than the full *eye*
Of the enthusiast revels on—when *high*, &c.

XCV.

"He can *hear*
The low dash of the wave with startled *ear*, &c.

XCVIII.

"When life is *old*
And many a scene forgot, the heart will *hold*," &c.

The poem concludes with the failure of Fanny's father. The following stanza is one of the last.

"Some evenings since he took a lonely stroll
Along Broadway, scene of past joys and evils,

He felt that withering bitterness of soul
Quaintly denominated the 'blue devils,'
And thought of Bonaparte and Belisarius,
Pompey, and Colonel Burr, and Caius Marius."

So ends Halleck's longest production. There is much fine poetical thought in it, elegant versification, and an occasional unexpectedness of "rhyme and reason," but the author lacks that range of the pathetic and the humorous which rendered Byron the most characteristic poet of the present age. Don Juan is the undoubted modern epic. The want of earnestness of the times is admirably mirrored in that wonderful poem. Half jest, half superstition, the world's face is there seen in all its incongruous phases. The mixed and uncertain state of the human mind had its epitome in Byron. Capable of the mightiest and the meanest actions, and often performing them well nigh together, the gloomy, infidel, devotional poet was the perfect representative of his age. It is this wonderful mobility of character which has made him the most popular writer since Shakspeare. He has an aspect for all classes of men. In his earlier efforts we behold the boy imitating his favorite authors. An insult roused him, and he rushed, under the inspiration of rage, into a field where he felt his strength. He then knew his power, and worked out, as caprice or accident prompted, his mighty poetical nature. The chivalric and romantic, the pathetic, the humorous, the satirical and supernatural, the gloomy pastoral and the historical or traditional, all were successfully thrown before the public, in different poems. At last,

by a singular effort, his last poem combined all these elements, and therefore Don Juan will always be the completest representation of a poet's idiosyncrasy ever revealed to his fellow men. In this many-sidedness Byron holds supreme dominion over his contemporaries. Wordsworth surpasses him in the intensity of his worship of nature. Moore, in his playful elaboration of metaphors, conventional elegances, and finely-edged wit. Scott, in the range of human character; although the objectivity of the novelist, and the subjectivity of the poet, render them perhaps unfit parallels. But in adaptability to the masses, as existing in the nineteenth century, no poet has so completely taken their nature upon him as the author of Don Juan. Even "Childe Harold," gloomy and subjective as it is, becomes a phase of the human mind, as shadowed in the present age, and has its root as much in the world as in the poet's heart. We make these remarks to show why we do not think that Mr. Halleck is the Byron of America. One half of his poetical labors is an imitation of the noble poet's greatest work. Materials for a poem of this description are not to be found in a young republic; the magazine is in ancient monarchies. Time is a vast storehouse of absurdity, solemnities, sorrows, and jests. This is the gamut of human nature, and it requires centuries to learn its science of harmony.

We conclude our notice of Halleck by assuring him that the Anglo-Saxons will expect finer poems than he has yet produced; it is in him, we know, for has he not revealed some of his powers by such lines as these? They come forth to the outer world just as a strain of melody bursts from a banquet hall,

where high revel is held, when the door is opened to admit some favored guest.

"Strike—till the last armed foe expires:
Strike—for your altars, and your fires;
Strike—for the green graves of your sires,
God, and your native land!"

RICHARD HENRY DANA.

THERE are a simplicity and individuality about Dana's writings, which give him the decided impress of being a man of more originality than he really possesses.

There is less reliance upon foreign sources for his subjects; he likewise treats them in a manner of his own, which compels the reader to respect him for his intention, if he cannot applaud him for the successful result of his experiment.

We shall treat of his poems first, and then consider him as a lecturer and essayist.

He is well known to the public as the author of the "Buccaneer," a poem of great merit, and full of fine thoughts, simply and forcibly described.

His portrait of the freebooter himself is drawn with a vigorous pencil. There is a total absence of all tawdry or adventitious embellishments in this old poet's verse, which stands out in bold relief to the artificial elegances and cuckoo-note tracks of many modern and fashionable authors.

"Twelve years are gone since Matthew Lee
Held in this isle unquestioned sway;

A dark, low, brawny man was he;
His law,—'It is my way!'
Beneath his thickset brows a sharp light broke
From small grey eyes: his laugh a triumph spoke."

This is a bold Roman kind of verse, which at once tells upon the reader. It somewhere or other strongly reminds us of Wordsworth's opening stanza of "Rob Roy:"

"A famous man was Robin Hood,
The English ballad-singer's joy;
But Scotland boasts a man as good,
It is her bold Rob Roy."

* * *

And shortly after come these lines:

"The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they shall take who have the power,
And they *shall keep* who can."

These coincidences are, however, unavoidable in poetry when they partake of the same peculiar nature, and many of Dana's simple, manly productions, remind us of the poet-laureate's.

The American writer dashes off with a few vigorous touches a graphic picture of the old Buccaneer.

"Cruel of heart, and strong of arm;
Loud in his sport, and keen for spoil,
He little recked of good or harm,—
Fierce both in mirth and toil.
Yet like a dog could fawn, if need there were;
Speak mildly when he would, or look in fear!"

Of another order in poetry, we quote some verses which

show the old poet's strength of hand in painting the sea; it is very suggestive to remark how the nature of the writer comes out in describing the same object. Byron, Cooper, and Dana, of moderns, have been successful in interesting the reader in the glorious old ocean. How differently, yet the same! The quiet simplicity of Dana is shown in these lines:

"But when the light winds lie at rest,
And on the glassy heaving sea,
The black duck, with her glossy breast,
Sits swinging silently.
How beautiful! no ripples break the reach,
And strong waves go noiseless up the beach."

* * * * *

Observe how little the subjective part of imagination is called into play here; only one incidental allusion of a remote kind in the ejaculation, "how beautiful!" All is pure outside description, simply and faithfully rendered.

"'T is fearful! on the broad-backed waves,
To feel them shake, and hear them roar,
Beneath, unsounded, dreadful caves,
Around, no cheerful shore.
Yet 'mid this solemn world what deeds are done!
The curse goes up, the deadly sea-fight's won.

* * * * *

The ship works hard; the sea runs high;
Their white tops flashing through the night,
Give to the eager straining eye,
A wild and shifting light.

* * *

On pale dead men, on burning cheek,
On quick, fierce eyes, brows hot and damp,
On hands that with the warm blood reek,
Shines the dim cabin lamp!

* * *

As swung the sea with heavy beat,
Below, and hear it break
With savage roar, then pause and gather strength,
And then come tumbling in its swollen length."

All this is literal, external painting. The two last lines are powerful; for, although the word "tumbling" is not very heroic, yet it is to a certain extent appropriately used in describing the mammoth rolling of the billows; nevertheless, there is a clumsiness about the word we do not like in connexion with the mighty ocean. There is a Titan march in the sea's movements which demands a word for itself.

"A sound is in the Pyrenees!
Whirling and dark comes roaring down
A tide as of a thousand seas,
Sweeping both cowl and crown:
A field and vineyard, thick and red it stood,
Spain's streets and palaces are wet with blood!"

There is a sternness about this poem, indeed about all his poetry, which deducts materially from the delights we generally feel in reading strong bold verse. To a certain extent, Dana reminds us of Crabbe. He, however, as certainly excels the English poet in dignity of treatment, as he falls below him in those minute descriptions which so frequently give to Crabbe's poems the air of condensed prose placed in lines of equal

length, the two last syllables of which are forced to rhyme.

Occasionally there are touches of great beauty and tenderness, which show that the poet can bring the tear as well as move respect.

"Too late for thee, thou young fair bride,
The lips are cold, the brow is pale,
That thou didst kiss in love and pride;
He cannot hear thy wail,
Whom thou didst lull with fondly murmured sound,
His couch is cold and lonely in the ground.

"He fell for Spain—her Spain no more,
For he was gone who made it dear;
And she would seek some distant shore,
Away from strife and fear;
And wait amid her sorrows till the day
His voice of love should call her thence away."

The Buccaneer persuades her to embark on board his vessel.

"With wealth and servants she is soon aboard,
And that white steed she rode beside her lord.

"The sun goes down upon the sea,
The shadows gather round her home;
How like a pall are ye to me,
My home how like a tomb!
O blow, ye flowers of Spain, above his head,
Ye will not blow o'er me when I am dead."

We are perpetually reminded, by every quotation, how ill-adapted for a sustained narrative is the stanza employed by Dana for this, the longest of his poems.

A similar error in judgment has been shown by Halleck in his "Fanny."

"Sleep—sleep, thou sad one of the sea!
The wash of waters tells thee now
His arm will no more pillow thee,
Thy fingers on his brow.
He is not near to hush thee or to save,
The ground is his, the sea must be thy grave."

The author thus violates the great rule of narrative composition, by here anticipating her fate.

The pirates' intention of murdering the helpless lady is graphically portrayed.

"Mourn for the living; mourn our sins,
The wrath of man more fierce than thine;
Hark—still thy waves—the work begins,
Lee makes the deadly sign;
The crew glide down like shadows, eye and hand
Speak fearful meanings through the silent band."

The fate of the fair lady is told admirably. A rapid sketch, and the whole is palpably presented, as a lightning flash bares the scenery for an instant, and then all is dark again.

"A crash! they force the door, and then
One long—*long* shrill and piercing scream
Comes thrilling 'bove the growl of men.
'Tis hers! O God, redeem
From worse than death thy suffering helpless child!
That dreadful shriek again, sharp, *sharp*, and wild.

"It ceased, with speed o' th' lightning's flash,
A loose robed form, with streaming hair,

Shoots by. A leap—a quick, short splash!
'Tis gone—and nothing there.
The waves have swept away the bubbling tide,
Bright, crested waves, how calmly on they ride.

"Her home of love
She soon has reached; fair, unpolluted thing,
They harmed her not; was dying suffering?"

This poem is, however, spoilt by its improbable catastrophe. There is a mixture of the terrible and the absurd, which produces an equivocal result altogether destructive of the true purpose of poetry.

The drowned horse rises from the sea and seeks the buccaneers at the anniversary revel of their murderous exploit. Compelled by a supernatural power, the wretched pirate, Matthew Lee, is forced to stride the spectre horse.

"Borne by an unseen power right on he rides,
Yet touches not the shadow beast he strides.

"He goes with speed, he goes with dread!
And now they're on the hanging steep!
And now the living and the dead,
They'll make the horrid leap.
The horse stops short—his feet are on the verge:
He stands like marble high above the surge."

With a true poet's soul, in the midst of this human agony, Dana brings in the contradictory, yet consoling beauty of nature, to relieve the horror.

"Thou mild—sad mother—silent moon,
Thy last, low melancholy ray,

Shines towards him: quit him not so soon!
Mother, in mercy stay!
Despair and death are with him, and canst thou,
With that kind earthward look, go leave him now!

"O! thou wast born for worlds of love;
Making more lovely in thy shine
Whate'er thou lookest on; hosts above
In that soft light of thine
Burn softer; earth, in silvery veil seems heaven.
Thou'st going down—hast left him unforgiven!"

There is a similar instance of throwing the accent from the man to the moon, if we may be allowed such an expression, in a poem of Byron's. We think it is in the "Siege of Corinth," when the renegade is compelled to decide on a momentous question, before a thin filmy cloud has reached the moon.

"There is a light cloud by the moon,
'T is passing, and will pass full soon," &c.

Dana has shown great power in this recognition of a wretch's mute appeal to creation for sympathy and support. We were told by a man of great imagination, who had been confined in a lunatic asylum against his will, that he often gazed on the moon, and endeavored to throw his whole soul into the look he gave it, that it might produce a sympathetic effect upon his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, and who was ignorant of his durance. It has been well said by a modern writer, that physical assassinations have gone out of fashion, and that lunatic asylums have been substituted. Our experience is able to confirm this opinion. Let us turn from lunacy to poetry.

"The spectre steed now slowly pales,
Now changes like the moon-lit cloud;
That cold, thin light, now slowly fails
Which wrapt them like a shroud.
Both ship and shore are fading into air,
Lost, mazed, alone, see, Lee is standing there.

* * * * *

"For he's accursed from all that's good;
He ne'er must know its healing power.
The sinner on his sin shall brood,
And wait alone his hour.
A stranger to earth's beauty, human love—
No rest for him below—no hope above!"

The rest of the story is told with equal power: the effect of the whole being somewhat spoiled by the supernatural nature of the denouement. In one sense, we may conclude it is merely a mental power, under which the guilty hero passes, and which leaves him despoiled of reason. If this be the poet's intention, he has not achieved his object with any skill.

These verses have a sweet musical effect:

"And now the mist seems taking shape,
Forming a dim, gigantic ghost,—
Enormous thing! There's no escape,
'T is close upon the coast.
Lee kneels, but cannot pray—why mock him so?
The ship has cleared the fog—Lee, let her go!

"A sweet, low voice, in starry nights,
Chants to his ear a plaining song;
Its tones come winding up the heights,

Telling of woe and wrong:
And he must listen till the stars grow dim,
The song that gentle voice doth sing to him.

"O, it is sad that aught so mild
Should bind the soul with bands of fear;
That strains to soothe a little child,
The man should dread to hear!
But sin hath broke the world's sweet peace—unstrung
The harmonious chords to which the angels sung.

As we said before, the defect in this poem is the mixed feelings roused by the perusal. If the events described as being the consequences of the murder are physical actions, the story is so improbable and out of nature as to do away with it altogether as a work of art. If the agonies endured by Lee are mental processes, by a diseased imagination worked on by remorse, then we feel bound to say that the poet has lamentably failed in the execution of his design. Taking it, however, as it now stands, it is a collection of verses powerfully sketched, but deficient in that probability of story which alone can lend a truthfulness to it.

In the "Changes of Home" we recognise a greater consistency of purpose, while the execution is less vivid; the lines are musical and clear, though displaying little imagination. This poem has, however, more tenderness than any of his works.

"Yet there was one true heart—that heart was thine,
Fond Emmeline! and every beat was mine.
It stopt. That stillness! Up it rose and spread
Above me, awing, vast, strange, living—dead!
No feeble grief that sobs itself to rest,—

Benumbing grief, and sorrows filled my breast:
Dark death, and sorrow dark, and terror blind,—
They made my soul to quail, they shook my mind,
Wild rushings passed me as of driving wind.

* * * * *

There stands my home—no more my home; and they
Who loved me so—they too have passed away.
The sun lies on the door sill, where my book
I daily read, and fitted line and hook,
And shaped my bow; or dreamed myself a knight
By lady loved, by champion feared in fight."

* * * * *

The following reminds us strongly of Crabbe:

"But he, their son?—They had a son, you said?

"A rich relation saw the boy had mind,
Such minds a market in the world must find,
So said he—and the boy must learning have,
For learning, power, and wealth, and honors gave.
Mind and a market! Will he sell the child,
As slaves are sold? they ask. The uncle smiled.
And does not Nathan teach to read and write,
To spell and cipher? letters to indite?
What's learning, then, that he must needs go seek
So far from home? They call it Latin, Greek.
Wisely all further question they forbore,
And looked profound, though puzzled as before."

The next quotation seems like a page from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village."

"Low were the words at our repast, and few;
Each felt the silence to the other due.

At length upon our thoughtful minds there stole
Converse that gently won the saddened soul."

* * * * *

"We reached a shop: no lettered sign displayed
The owner's name, or told the world his trade.
But on its door, cracked, rusty hinges swung,
And there a hook, and well-worn horseshoe hung.
The trough was dry; the bellows gave no blast;
The hearth was cold, nor sparks flew red and fast:
Labor's strong arm had rested—where was he,
Brawny and bare, who toiled and sang so free?"

* * * * *

The following scene is beautifully told.

"The village passed, we came where stood aloof,
An aged cot with low and broken roof.
The sun upon its walls in quiet slept;
Close by the door the stream in silence crept;
No rustling birds were heard among the trees,
That high and silent stood, as slept the breeze.
The cot wide open; yet there came no sound
Of busy steps; 't was all in stillness bound.
Solemn, yet lovely stillness, as a spell
On this sweet rest and mellow sunshine fell!"

If we were to quote all we admire in this fine poem we should scarcely leave a line out; we therefore only select those parts which please us most. Who does not feel the truth of this?

"Ah! sweet it is to gaze upon the face,
Long seen but by the mind,—to fondly trace,

Each look and smile again: 't is life renewed,—
How fresh!—how dim was that by memory moved!
And oh, how pines the soul! how doth it crave
Only a moment's look! 'T is in the grave,
That lovely face, no more to bless thine eyes.
Nay, wait, thou 'lt meet it soon in yonder skies."

Wordsworth has, in the first book of his "Excursion," drawn an elaborate picture of a sore heart-wasting in the "Tale of Margaret." There the poet reaches the supreme eminence of a broken heart, dying out of a resigned despair, by one of the most wonderful ascents ever achieved by a poet. It could, no doubt, be done in half the number of lines, but then we should miss that slow approach, which, like a beleaguering army, draws closer round every day till the captive is destroyed. Dana paints the same effect, in a few lines, with great force and skill.

"A year went by. Another came and passed.
This third, her friends would say, must be the last.
Spake of his coming then, and how he'd look.
She turned more pale: her head she slowly shook,
And something muttered, as in talk with one
Whom no one saw—then said, 'It must be done!'"

But our space warns us that we must quote no more from this fine poem; though not the longest, we consider it infinitely the finest the old poet has written; there is a quiet power in it which shows the real spirit.

In "Factitious Life" there is a vein of quiet humor we did not give the poet credit for.

In another mood, the sea is thus addressed:

"Now stretch your eye off *shore*, *o'er* waters made
To cleanse the air, and bear the world's great trade,
To rise, and wet the mountains near the sun,
Then back into themselves in rivers run,
Fulfilling mighty uses far and wide,
Through earth, in air, or here, as ocean tide."

This is certainly as completely utilitarian as though Jeremy Bentham himself had written it.

"Ho! how the giant heaves himself, and strains,
And flings, to break his strong and viewless chains;
Foams in his wrath; and at his prison doors,—
Hark! hear him, how he beats, and tugs, and roars—
As if he would break forth again and sweep
Each living thing within his lowest deep.
Type of the Infinite! I look away
Over thy billows, and I cannot stay
My thought upon a resting-place, or make
A shore beyond my vision, where they break:—
But on my spirit stretches, till it 's pain
To think:—then rests, and then puts forth again.
Thou hold'st me by a spell: and on thy beach
I feel all soul; and thoughts unmeasured reach
Far back beyond all date: *and O! how old*
Thou art to me! for countless years thou hast rolled;
Before an ear did hear thee, thou didst mourn,
Prophet of sorrows, o'er a race unborn:—
Waiting, thou mighty minister of death,
Lonely thy work, ere man had drawn his breath."

The four last lines embody a bold thought, well expressed;

the preceding lines, however, are very tame; and the lines we have italicized are remarkably prosaic.

"And last thou didst it well! The dread command
Came, and thou swepst to death the breathing land:
And then once more, unto the silent heaven
Thy lone and melancholy voice was given.
And though the land is thronged again, O sea!
Strange sadness touches all that goes with thee.
The small bird's plaining note, the wild, sharp call,
Share thy own spirit: it is sadness all!
How dark and stern upon thy waves looks down
Yonder tall cliff—he with the iron crown!
And see, those sable pines along the steep
Are come to join thy requiem, gloomy deep!
Like stoled monks they stand and chant the dirge
Over the dead, with thy low beating surge!"

There is a simplicity in these lines amounting to a bareness; such as, "And see!" "Hark, hear him!"

In the "Dying Raven" Mr. Dana shows many of the peculiarities of his nature. It is a fine subject, and treated with considerable force and pathos; it has, however, the unfortunate defect of being too long; a grave fault in a poem, as well as in a sermon. It is reported of a lively novelist that he was so much pleased with the first part of a discourse that he resolved to bestow a dollar upon the charity in whose behalf it was delivered, but owing to the prolixity of the clergyman he was preached down into a sixpenny state of mind!

We shall now turn to Mr. Dana's prose writings, after a few remarks, which seem necessary as a sort of explanation, for the

greater degree of attention we have given to the poets in this volume than to the prose writers of America.

Some readers may think that we give an undue influence to poetry, but we cannot forget that Lord Byron himself has acknowledged that it is above history and above philosophy—more divine in its origin, and more immediately salutary in its use.

With this sentiment on his lips, how singular is it that the great philosopher has never named the greatest poet the world has ever produced! A German writer says that Shakspeare is as far above man, as God is above Shakspeare. Without upholding this singular dogma, we may be permitted to say that all men have now agreed upon considering the author of "Hamlet" as the first intellect of the human race. While we are on the point of Shakspeare and Bacon, we may name that the great poet has quoted part of one of Bacon's essays, in Maria's letter to Malvolio, and an ill-natured critic has been malicious enough to suppose that the great dramatist meant to satirize the chancellor, under the name of Malvolio; and that Lady Olivia was intended to represent Queen Elizabeth, and Sebastian, Lord Essex. Contemporary historians certainly allude to Bacon's egotism and love of display; if so, the cross-gartering of Malvolio becomes almost too ludicrous to be taken as an allusion to Bacon's splendid costume.

The chancellor is certainly a steward, but there, we take it, the likeness ends: to insist longer upon this point would be to realize the logic of the man who declared that Cæsar and Pompey were very much alike, especially Pompey!

But we must return to poetry. There is a greater resem-

blance between the prophets and the poets, than there is between the lord-chancellor of Queen Elizabeth and the Malvolio of Lady Olivia.

Prophecy was of a divine instinct; poetry is of the same nature. There may be in the former more of *faith;* there is in the latter more of *imagination.* The lingering voice of God in the Garden of Eden was the poetry of Adam; the echo of that voice is the poetry of the fallen race.

If we glance for a minute at the history of the world we shall find that the ancients are chiefly renowned for their poets, such as Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, Anacreon, and others that naturally suggest themselves to the reader's mind.

Coleridge defined prose to be proper words in their proper places, and poetry to be the best words in the best places. Some have objected to this definition as being too mechanical, but it must be borne in mind that Coleridge always included the mechanical in his definitions, otherwise it would only realize the poets of whom Wordsworth and Byron have spoken, such as those "who want the faculty of verse," and "many are poets who have never penned a single stanza, and perchance the best!"

Mr. Dana's chief prose work is "The Idle Man," a collection of papers much in the style of the "Sketch Book," but displaying infinitely more vigor of thought and force of style.

The critique on Kean is very just, and shows a greater knowledge of the requisites of a great actor than so secluded a man could be expected to exhibit.

Mr. Dana's prose is remarkably clear. It is of a far stronger order of writing than Irving's or Willis's, but we miss in it the

sly humor of the one and the piquant liveliness of the other: the whole is made in a firmer mould. There is nothing very original either in thought or expression, but in lieu, we have sound, earnest feeling, in good strong English. The chief fault is an amplitude of execution, which borders on the tedious; there is an absence of those flashes of imagination which light up a page, and illuminate the whole subject. In short, Mr. Dana is one of the old school, and abominates the new fashions of composition.

His prejudice in favor of his own school of writing is amusingly exemplified in his essay on "Hazlitt;" as a proof we select a few specimens from that paper.

He thus commences with his energetic protest against the sketchy illustration of the English critic:

"Here is a book of large and stately type, and fair and ample margin, which, with eighty pages of extracts, and a good stretch of blank at the beginnings and endings of chapters, leaves, after the deduction of a general introductory chapter, a little more than two hundred pages in which to treat upon the English Poets, commencing with old Chaucer, and closing with criticisms upon those of the present day."

Mr. Dana should bear in mind the intention of the volume thus denounced. It was not to make an elaborate exposition of every line the poets treated of, but to point out their peculiarities, which can be as well done in a dozen pages as in a volume. These voluminous critiques always defeat themselves. There would be no end to such minute examination.

We remember, some years ago, Mr. Horne, in the "Monthly Chronicle," commenced a series of papers called the "Unde-

veloped Characters of Shakspeare." He carried them on for some time, and grew eloquent when he introduced us to the mother of Desdemona, the father of Othello, and the grandfather of Lady Macbeth. Even the Egyptian who gave the handkerchief to Othello's mother was not forgotten.

A critic in the "Morning Herald" brought the series to a precipitate end, by reminding the curious critic that he must not omit, when he came to Macbeth, to give the birth, parentage, and education of the "farrow of nine," as well as a history of their esteemed parent. Mr. Dana seems to be of Mr. Horne's researching nature.

We were not prepared for this unkind appreciation of Goldsmith:

> "What Gray says of Addison's versification, we are sorry to add, too well applies to Goldsmith's also, which scarcely has above three or four notes in poetry, sweet enough, indeed, like those of a German flute, but such as soon tire and satiate the ear with their frequent return."

To this Mr. Dana ill-naturedly adds:

> "Goldsmith played this very instrument; it was significant."

We are sorry he does not like the flute, as it is the entire orchestra of the amiable author of the "Behemoth, or the last of the Mastodons," who, we understand, performs the "Hallelujah Chorus," "Hail Columbia," and "Yankee Doodle" on it with the surprising effect of clearing the street where he resides in a very few minutes. Mr. Dana's criticism is sometimes ingeniously amusing. For instance, he defends the undoubted foibles of his favorites in this manner:

"For the most part, we should be content with them as we find them, lest, with that obstinacy so common to such minds, they run more into the fault, or lest, in the endeavor to remove it, they tear away some beauty which was more closely connected with it than we are aware.

"Some have complained of Milton's inversions, and perhaps they are now and then overstrained. Had he begun to correct them, who can tell where he would have stopped? Had he listened, some pedant critic might have spoiled the loftiest and most varied harmony of English verse. In the same way, Cowper's rhyme might have lost all its spirit. And had *Wordsworth, in the Excursion, given more compactness to his thoughts, where they are sometimes languidly drawn out, he might have lost something of that calm moral sentiment, of that pure shedding of the soul over his world of beauties, which lie upon them like gentle and thoughtful sunset upon the earth.*"

With all deference for so experienced a critic as Mr. Dana, we cannot agree to this piece of special pleading for Wordsworth's prosiness. "Calm, moral sentiment" is dignified and concise, and not wire-drawn verbosity, which constitutes so large a portion of "The Excursion."

There is an occasional shrewdness about his remarks which throws more light upon his subject than a dozen pages of his usual style. Critics complain of an author's dulness, and "out-Herod Herod" by their own examples. Like Diogenes, they tread upon the pride of Plato with greater pride. This Satan-rebuking sin was one day very amusingly exemplified by that prince of rare fellows, Elliston. He was informed that one of his first ladies of the ballet was so indignant at some dissatisfaction expressed by the audience one evening, that she declared

she would not finish her "pas de seul." The manager was horror-struck at her pride, and sent for her to lecture her on such a preposterous self-conceit. The indignant danseuse was ushered into the presence of Robert William, the great autocrat of the theatrical world. He received her with these words: "Madame, I hope you will allow me to say that an audience has a right to hiss as well as to applaud. Your pride is dreadful to contemplate. Are you aware that *I myself have actually been hissed?*"

The lady's reply was, "Indeed, sir, and I hope you liked it."

To return to Dana's critique, he says very happily:

"The French tied up their writers, with the little inspiration they had, as if they were madmen, till well might Madame de Staël ask, 'Why all this reining of dull steeds?' At the same time they taught the world to hold as uncouth the movements natural to man, and to admire sudden, sharp, angular shootings of the limbs as the only true lines of beauty, yet the polite world not long ago read and talked nothing but French, and 'went to church in a galliard, and came home in a levanto.'"

It is pleasant to meet with an American writer who has the courage to speak what he thinks right out, and this rare virtue belongs essentially to Dana. We hope the American public will receive patiently the expression of our firm belief that there is less freedom of opinion in the greatest of republics than in many of the greatest of despotisms.

Mr. Dana says:

"We must not forget, however, to make one exception from our general neglect of American authors, for therein is our boast—our

very liberal patronage of the compilers of geographies, in great and little, reading-books, spelling-books, and arithmetics. It is encouraging to our literary adventurers, that, should they fail to please the public in works of invention, they have at least this resort; and the consolation, that if they are not to rank with the poets and novel writers of the day, they may be studied and admired till Pike and Webster are forgotten."

All this, no doubt, is very encouraging to men of imagination, such as the author of "Kaloolah" and others of his genius for romance, but it is a very hard thing to be said of a great nation, who speak the language that Shakspeare spoke, and hold the faith and morals of Milton, to use the thought of Wordsworth—but it is undoubtedly true even at this minute to a certain extent, although we fancy we discern signs of a clearing up of this Boethian night of American literature.

A great portion of this crying injustice to native authors is founded in either the timidity or malice of some of the reviews. We are told that the editors of one of the leading critical papers in New York have not the courage to mention the name of a well-known American writer in their columns, although he is their personal friend, and a contributor to their paper. To make this the more startling, we are justified in adding that privately they esteem him as a writer of great and sterling merit. What a state! when men of independent fortune dare not in their own review honestly avow their own opinions! This "suppressio veri" has a name in the logic of Bacon, which would apply here very strongly. Dana is a gratifying contrast to the Adelphi above alluded to; he says very innocently:

"Mr. Irving's immediate success does not rest, perhaps, wholly upon his merit, however great. 'Salmagundi' came out in numbers, and a little at a time. With a few exceptions, it treated of the city, and what was seen and felt, and easy to be understood by those in society. It had to do with the present and real, not the distant and ideal. It was pleasant morning or after-dinner reading, never taking up too much of a gentleman's time from his business and pleasures, nor so exalted and spiritualized as to seem mystical to his far-reaching vision. It was an excellent thing to speak of in the rests between cotillon, and pauses between games at cards, and answered a further convenient purpose, inasmuch as it furnished those who had none of their own with wit enough, for sixpence, to talk out the sitting of an evening party. In the end, it took fast hold of people, through their vanity; for frequent use had made them so familiar with it as to look upon it as their own: and having retailed its good things so long, they began to run of the notion that they were all of their own making."

This is a very fair brick of the Dana architecture, and exhibits how painstaking and candid a critic he is; it also shows up that *elongation* rather than that *elaboration* of criticism, which so frequently wearies the reader, and spoils the effect of his own simple, earnest thought. He is, too, afraid of its not being understood in all its bearings. We are happy to be able to agree with Mr. Dana in praising Mr. Irving's "Salmagundi;" it was one of the favorite books of our childhood, and it will, with the "History of New York," probably be his chief passport to fame.

Notwithstanding Mr. Dana's manliness of sentiment, he is a little bitten with the classical Addisonian mania. An admi-

ration of that agreeable writer seems to be a sort of literary measles, which most English and American writers are obliged to have once in their life, and then afterwards to be safe from further attacks.

In another essay, written many years ago, Mr. Dana shows a great advance upon the system of education then in vogue.

"We have become too officious in our helps to children; we leave not enough to the workings of nature, and to impressions and tints too exquisite and delicate for any hands but hers; but with a vain and vulgar ignorance disturb the character she was silently and slowly moulding into beauty, till it is formed to our narrow and false taste. Anxious lest the clearness of their reason should be dimmed, their minds are never left to work their own way through the obscure: but ever-burning lights are held up before them. They are not indulged in the conjectural, but all is anticipated and overdone. We do not enough consider that oftentimes the very errors into which they fall, through a want of thorough knowledge of what they see or read, bring the invention into action, and thus give a life to the mind, which will survive when these errors are removed and forgotten. Children may reason well, as far as their knowledge carries them along, and their reason may still preside over what their imagination supplies.

"An over-anxiety to make of babies little matter-of-fact men and unbreeched philosophers, will not add much to their sum of knowledge in after life, and nothing to that faculty which teaches them to consider and determine for themselves, and begets that independent wisdom without which their heaped up knowledge is but an incumbrance. A child now learns by heart how a shoe is made, from the flaying of an ox for the leather to the punching

the last hole, and can give the best of reasons for its being so made, when it had much better be chasing a rainbow. Such a system may make inquisitive, but not wide-ranging minds. It kills the poetry of our character, without enlarging our philosophy, and will hardly make us worthier members of society, or give us the humble compensation of turning out better mechanics."

All this is admirable, and shows that the truest practical wisdom is in the most poetical minds. The old system of education has many fine traits in it—we mean the old chivalric theory. Now utility is the Juggernaut before whose wheels everything noble or romantic is thrown down and crushed. The loftiest minds are those most required in the busy world; they are the salt that sweetens the earth, the yeast that leavens the whole. A poet should be encouraged to come out into the crowded haunts, and mingle familiarly with his fellow-men, and not, as is often the case, driven into his own solitary chamber, to turn his face to the wall and die. The great, the fatal evil of the present day is want of imagination. There is not enough to bring the human masses to that average idealism absolutely necessary to carry on the Christian government of the world. The New Testament is rapidly becoming practically obsolete, but, like all hypocrites, the respectable classes preach *more* in proportion as they practise *less*. Our Saviour would stand a poor chance in modern cities; destitution or a jail would be his fate, while possibly some benevolent men might suggest a lunatic asylum as a humane compromise.

Tested by the world, the Sermon on the Mount is an absurdity, and the actions of Christ those of a maniac. Hard as it may appear, the majority of respectable men are practical

atheists. It is reported that an English millionaire, in a discussion once with an enthusiast, who was arguing that money was a very secondary matter, and that our Saviour had a great contempt for riches, astonished the worthy Christian by boldly declaring "that he could not deny but that Christ had held those opinions, but," said he, "it always seemed to me that our Saviour was not sufficiently aware of the value of money." This setting Omniscience right is done by the great bulk of mankind. Every merchant does it every hour of his life. The money-changers of Threadneedle street and Wall street utter cutting sarcasms in reply to "What shall a man receive in exchange for his soul?" Dollars or pounds sterling, of course!

We do not wish to undervalue the practical faculties and the useful part of man's nature. We should as soon think of neglecting the body merely because the soul was of so much more importance. One is necessary to the other, to complete the human being, and in like manner poetry is as needful to the well-being of man as religion and morals are to society.

Dana well observes:

"Society should be like the earth about us, where the beautiful, the grand, the humble, the useful, lie spread out, and running into each other; where, indeed, for the most part, so beautiful is the useful that we almost forget its uses in its beauty."

There is a general yet dignified tolerance running throughout our author's writings, which shows the liberal mind as well as poetical heart. The following is another proof of that careful working up of his modes of illustration, which shows how completely he has studied his subject. Still we miss in this well

ordered prose those touches of light which reveal more than words:

"We are filling our hot-houses and gardens with plants of the tropics, and of the earth. We decompose air, and water, and earths. Find the dip of rocks, and mark their strata; voyage into regions of thick-ribbed ice; travel up to the sources of strange rivers; betake ourselves to the mountain tops, and are bustling and busy in this great huddling and overturning of everything within our reach, while the delightful mystery within us lives on unexamined and unobserved. But if the pursuit of this mystery has been neglected for objects more gainful, or of cheaper fame, it has inward satisfyings and healthful moral uses, which are found only here. We can scarcely look into the hearts of other men without seeing the workings of our own, and learning to know ourselves in studying them. This brings us nearly to each other, and in opening out like weaknesses and like virtues, teaches us forgiveness and love."

There is a sustained power of reasoning in most of Dana's prose works which insensibly produces on the reader's mind that respectful assent, which is the highest tribute a second-rate writer can receive. To the chief bards of prose composition, such as Milton, Jeremy Taylor, and their compeers, alone belongs that enthusiastic reverence which carries us along in a glow of delight.

Who can forget the first study of the Areopagitica of the former, or the Sermons of the latter? They are epochs in the life of the mind! We take leave of Mr. Dana with a sincere respect for his talents. Both in prose and verse he has earned a right to be considered as one of the most genuine writers of

America. We prefer his poetry to his prose for several reasons, but chiefly on account of its comprising the qualities of that species of composition with a higher faculty. His verse is carefully finished, and displays occasionally a vein of imagination, which, if more sustained, would place him very high in the rank of even English poets. He has less unmeaning epithets than any American poet, except Emerson, we have met with, and some of his illustrations are remarkably happy. There is, however, a want of constructiveness in his mind which impairs his power as a narrative poet.

His prose writings are full of sound thought in sound English, and evince in every page, if not the man of an original genius or a wide range of mind, at all events one who has the sagacity to think for himself, and the honesty to write what he thinks.

FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD.

It is very seldom that a woman of any real genius has so great a facility of throwing her fancies into shape as Mrs. Osgood. Had her utterance been more difficult she would have written better. Mrs. Hemans was an example of how much fine poetry is weakened by that elegant clothing of satin which she could so easily throw over her children. The very opening poem of the American poetess is a striking instance. It reminds us of a weak translation of some of Anacreon's odes by Thomas Moore.

"Love, no more with that soul of fire
Sweep the strings and sound the lyre;
All too wild the sad refrain,
When thy touch awakes the strain.
Thou henceforth must veil thy face,
With its blush of childish grace,
Still thy sweet entrancing tone,
Fold thy wings and weep alone!"

The idea is here positively so weakened by amplification that we can hardly be said to recognise one in the whole eight lines.

What can be done in that number of verses every reader of Goldsmith can tell—

"When lovely woman stoops to folly."

The lady whom we thus criticise tells us what she can perform in a small compass, when she pleases—

"Lyre! amid whose chords my soul,
Lulled, enchanted, proudly stole,
Folly, vanity, and mirth,
Long have turned thy tones to earth,
I will take thee hushed and holy,
Changed in heart, and sad and lowly,
Into Nature's mother's heart,
There I'll lay thee down to rest."

This species of verse is very captivating. It seems as though it were the same that Pope said—"Lord, Fanny spins a thousand such a day." To be closely written it is perhaps more difficult than any in the language. Lord Byron was one of the few that could wield the Anacreontic rhythm with much effect.

In her "Spirit of Poetry" there is a great tenderness and a deep yearning after the undefined.

"Leave me not yet! leave me not cold and lonely,
Thou dear ideal of my pining heart!
Thou art the friend—the beautiful—the only
Whom I would keep, though all the world depart!
Thou that dost veil the frailest flower with glory,
Spirit of light, and loveliness, and truth,
Thou that didst tell me a sweet fairy story,
Of the dim future, in my wistful youth."

There are, however, far too many lines in this poem; nevertheless there is a fine vein of impassioned feeling throughout.

In "Ermengardes Awakening" there are many stanzas of great beauty.

"And the proud woman thrilled to its false glory,
And when the murmur of her own true soul
Told in low lute tones love's impassioned story
She dreamed that music from the statue stole,
And knelt adoring at the silent shrine,
Her own divinity had made divine.

* * * * *

"Like Egypt's queen in her imperial play,
She in abandonment more wildly sweet
Melted the pearl of her pure *life* away,
And poured the rich libation at its feet;
And in exulting rapture *dreamed* the smile
That should have answered in its eye the while."

This stanza is full of woman's best thought:

"And in her desolate agony she cast
Her form beside love's shivered treasure there,
And cried, 'Oh, God! my life of life is past,
And I am left alone with my despair!'
Hark, from the lute one low, melodious sigh,
Thrilled to her heart a sad yet sweet reply!"

In her "Eurydice" there are lines so full of passionate feeling that we seem to be sharing the thought of something between man and woman:

"Now soft and low a prelude sweet uprings,
As if a prisoned angel, pleading there

For life and love, were fettered 'neath the strings,
And poured his passionate soul upon the air.
Anon it clangs with wild, exultant swell,
Till the full pæan peals triumphantly through hell."

In the verses to Queen Victoria on her way to Guildhall, we noticed that yearning after the glitter of the old despotism which is so marked a feature in the upper classes of American society. Turkey carpets, brilliant furniture, and crowded balls, insensibly undermine that republican independence so indispensable to the welfare of the American people.

Sometimes she endeavors to mix up instruction with song, as in "Laborare est Orare," but she is not successful in these attempts.

"'Labor is worship,'—the robin is singing:
'Labor is worship,'—the wild bee is singing:
Listen that eloquent whisper upspringing,
Speaks to thy soul from out nature's great heart."

The greatest attempt Mrs. Osgood has made is in her "Fragments of an Unfinished Story." Here we have a poem of nearly four hundred lines in blank verse, which we have been told by the authoresses themselves is the most difficult of all for a lady to write. One can easily comprehend this; the delicate feminine nature is carried along by her musical sympathies, and there is something too independent in a verse which leans not on rhyme for support.

The commencement contains a very startling creed, which we suppose few are ready to give faith to.

"A friend! are you a friend? No, by my soul,
Since you dare breathe the shadow of a doubt
That I am true as truth. Since you give not
Unto my briefest look—my gayest word,
My faintest change of cheek, my softest touch,
Most sportive, causeless smile, or low-breathed sigh—
Nay, to my voice's lightest modulation,
Though imperceptible to all but you;
If you give not to these, unquestioning,
A limitless faith, the faith you give to heaven—
I will not call you friend."

It is a pity the fair writer had not put this idea into half the space. She has wiredrawn the sentiment till we lose its form altogether. Every line obliterates a part of the image instead of completing it.

"Deny me faith—that poor yet priceless boon,
And you deny the very soul of love!"

Here we have the whole summed up in a concise manner, which we wish she would more frequently employ. She well says:

"What though a thousand seeming proofs condemn me?
If my calm image smile not dear through all,
Serene and without shadow on your heart!
Nay, if the very vapors that would visit it,
Part not illumined by its presence pure,
As round night's tranquil queen the clouds divide,
Then rend it from that heart!"

We recognise in every page that tendency to sacrifice sense to sound—the thought to the melody. This, we are aware, is a

lady-like quality, but not the invariable accompaniment of the female muse. In Elizabeth Barrett we have a rare instance of more solicitude for the idea than the words. Miss Fuller likewise treats the melody of her verses as a secondary object; but we fear Mrs. Osgood considers it of primary importance. Music resembles poetry, all admit, and in nothing is the resemblance more complete than in this; that the thought should be in poetry what the melody is in music, and that the versification of the one answers to the bass accompaniment of the other; the thought and the air should of course be the controlling power.

Some of her poems are exceedingly graceful. We take this as an instance:

"Round a lattice low, to twine,
Rose a graceful cylantine;
And within the window near
Hung a prism cold and clear,
Where a spirit dwelt apart,
With a proud but pining heart,
Like a weary,
Languid Peri,
Captive in a diamond palace,
Catching sunbeams in a chalice."

There is a great mechanical fancy in Mrs. Osgood's poems; some are, indeed, too ingenious to please us. There is a determination to work up comparisons and fables. In many we have the old style of putting "sermons in stones," and "breath to the brook!"

"The brook tripped by, with smile and sigh,
And soft in music murmurs sung,
While all the flowers that blossomed nigh,
Were hushed to hear that silver tongue.

"'Ah, virgin violet, *breathed the brook*,
Whose blue eye shuns the light, the air,
I love you! in this true heart look,
And see your own sweet image there.'"

This is very well for little children, but one who has pretensions to so high a station in poetry as Mrs. Osgood should not publish them for grown people.

But in the "Dying Rosebud's Lament" she has carried this prettiness to the verge of affectation. We are willing to allow a great margin to a lady's sympathy, but we cannot go the Ultima Thule of Mrs. Osgood.

"Ah me! ah woe is me!
That I should perish now,
With the dear sunlight just let in
Upon my balmy brow.

"My leaves, instinct with glowing life,
Were quivering to unclose,
My happy heart with love was rife,
I was almost a Rose!"

We cannot forget that Keats has said all that can be said of a rose-bud or a rose.

"As though a rose could shut and be a bud again."

In the "Ashes of Roses" we have a more solemn subject for

reflection. It is supposed to be written by a mother on the death of her child, and is certainly a triumph of its kind. It is, however, a painful poem to read, if we believe it is founded on fact. Dryden observes, "great grief is dumb," and we can hardly realize a mother making a song out of a dead child. But when we say this we make every concession the poet's nature may demand, and we know that "the ways of genius are not our ways, nor their thoughts our thoughts." Still, human nature is the same in the poet as in the ploughboy; nay, even in the editor, that sublimation of humanity soaring above the weakness of virtue or the enormity of affection.

In years after, when some casual occurrence reminds the living of the departed, the chords of emotion may thrill at the touch, but even then the music will be fragmentary, and partake more of the accidental than the deliberate design.

It seems almost like digging the dead up from the solemn peace of the sepulchre to gaze once more on that form which should be transfigured in heaven. Nevertheless, with all these considerations, time may soften the grief, and render it susceptible of a poetical apotheosis.

"Truly the memory of the just
Smells sweet and blossoms in the dust!"

The poem which has provoked these remarks is full of truthful, vigorous painting, and if written out of the ideality of the sorrow, and not its reality, secures for its fair anthoress much praise. With this proviso the whole demands unqualified admiration.

She faded, faded in my arms, and with a faint slow sigh
Her fair, young spirit went away. Ah! God, I felt her die,

* * * * * * *

A little flower might so have died—so tranquilly she closed
Her lovely mouth, and on my heart her helpless head reposed."

* * * * * * *

The sense of security against all ills which a child feels in the presence of a mother is touchingly told.

"For oh! it seemed the darling dreamed that while she clung to me,
Safe from all harm of death or pain she could not help but be,
That I who watched in helpless grief my flower fade away,
That I—oh, heaven! had life and strength to keep her from decay!"

This line contains more thought and truth than are generally found in verses of this description.

"The soul that *here* must hide its face,
There lives serene in *right!*"
And ever in thy lovely path, some new, great truth divine,
Like a dear star that dawns in heaven, undyingly doth shine."

Mrs. Osgood has always a superior reference to the affections in everything she writes. In her "Deaf Girl Restored" are some charming verses."

"A world of melody wakes around,
Each leaf of the tree has its tremulous tone,
And the rippling rivulet's lullaby sound,
And the wood bird's warble are all mine own.

But nothing—oh! nothing that I have heard,
Not the lay of the lark nor the coo of the dove,
Can match, with its music, one fond, sweet word,
That thrills to my soul from the lips I love."

Mrs. Osgood is somewhat too profuse of her "ah's" and "oh's;" thay mar the harmony and repose of some of her finest verses. Sparingly used and placed in their right position, they are very effective, like a cordial administered to a sick patient; but when indulged in habitually, they defeat their own purpose, and, in fact, become positively injurious.

We all know how guarded the greatest masters of composition have been in the use of exclamations, and how carefully they have selected the fitting spot for their insertion. Sheridan's MS. of a famous speech shows that it took him some time to hit upon the most appropriate place for "Good God, Mr. Speaker."

As Mrs. Osgood has not thought fit to include her drama of "Elfrida" in the new edition of her poems, we shall not consider it critically, but pass over it with the remark that we consider it altogether a very creditable composition, more especially when the age at which she wrote it is taken into consideration. It is not fitted to the stage, being deficient in action and passion. It is more a story told by dialogues, artificially connected, but admirably written.

The chief merits of our fair writer are tenderness of feeling and grace of expression. As we observed before, she too frequently sacrifices the strength of the thought to the beauty of the words; and even here she often fails, from her diffuseness, and wish to say all that can be said on the theme she has in

hand. She has a lively fancy, but little imagination; and her fancy is sometimes displayed so artificially as to induce the reader to put it down altogether to the score of mere prettiness of thought and conceit of expression. Still, there are a feminine power, pathos, and tenderness about the writings of Mrs. Osgood, which will always render her one of the most pleasing poets of the New World.

S. MARGARET FULLER.

At this present time there are three women who greatly resemble each other in their intellectual nature: and they belong to the three greatest nations in the world. France has her Madame Dudevant, or better known by the name of George Sand; England, her Elizabeth Barrett; and America, her Margaret Fuller. Singular to add, they are all now within a short distance of each other, two being in Italy, and the other in Paris. The personal meeting of these, the first women of the age, must be of extraordinary interest, and we would cheerfully barter away a year of our own existence to listen to their communings for one day.

An American author of great eminence, some time since, denominated Margaret Fuller the George Sand of America; and, much as we dislike that hackneyed fashion of making the great intellect of one nation a kind of duplicate of another, yet there is more justness in this comparison than generally falls to the lot of that absurd method of getting at facts, or something like them.

It must of course be understood that we mean here only an

intellectual parallel. We name this to guard against the possibility of any misconception, as we know there is a prejudice against the French authoress on account of sundry freaks she is supposed to indulge in, such as assuming male attire, roaming the streets, and smoking cigars. With all these drawbacks, she is a woman of great and undoubted genius, and as such she has been acknowledged by the first intellects of the age.

We may as well mention here as a justification for our admiration of George Sand, that Elizabeth Barrett, wife to the poet Browning, has, in one of the finest sonnets of the time, warmly acknowledged her claim to the respect and sympathy of womankind. The praise of Elizabeth Barrett Browning outweighs a host of mongrel carpers.

It is a common method to attack every woman who endeavors to earn for her sex a loftier and more appreciatory position in the government of the world, or in the constitution of society. It certainly has happened with a few female reformers that they have carried their theories somewhat too wildly into practice, and overproved their case: like vaulting ambition, they have overleaped themselves. But while the world condemns the personal conduct of Mary Wolstoncroft, Mrs. Shelley, and some others, it should at least be just to those who avoid these errors. Were Christianity to be judged by the Simeon Stylites and other fanatics, who would profess themselves Christians? But it is the cunning of falsehood to confound an abuse with the use, and so make the truth itself hateful, or at all events doubtful.

It is a singular fact that man should have this enmity to women who endeavor the most to render woman more helpful

to him; and no less strange that woman herself should join in this crusade against the recovery of her long-lost birthright.

It seems almost absurd to say so, but it appears to us to be the truth (and confirmed by the experience of others) that there is great jealousy shown by men of all classes to women of great intellect.

This may, perhaps, account for the unpopularity of female writers, more especially if they happen to tread upon forbidden subjects, such as the equality of the sexes. In many men there is a great appearance of deference to the gentler part of creation, but we take it this proceeds from a lower feeling than that of respect. It is seldom that man shows a deference to anything except wealth or beauty: his instinct is against woman's intellect.

It is not, however, our intention to discuss this question; we merely give it as the opinion of many of the wisest men we have conversed with, and we content ourselves with merely making the assertion.

We have been led chiefly to this statement by the tone which many have adopted towards the eminent authoress at the head of this article.

We have carefully read, and at first with a prejudiced eye, all her writings, and we see no ground for the objections which have been made against her doctrines.

We hope to show that she is not alone one of the first of the daughters of America, but that she is one of the wisest of women.

We shall consider her prose writings first, and then "illumi-

nate our pages" with some of the most genuine poetry the female pen of the New World has produced.

We commence with the volume which first roused our attention and excited our admiration.

In 1843 she published her "Summer on the Lakes," and seldom has so small a volume contained so much fine thought and been so full of suggestiveness.

There is a total absence of the old notions. We here find one who has a freshness of nature which can think and feel for herself. How unlike the stale common-place rhapsodies on Niagara is the following:

"We have been here eight days, and I am quite willing to go away. So great a sight soon satisfies, making us content with itself, and with what is less than itself. Our desires once realized, haunt us again less readily: having 'lived one day' we would depart, and become worthy to live another.

"We have not been fortunate in weather, for there cannot be too much or too warm sunlight for this scene, and the skies have been lowering with cold, unkind winds. My nerves, too much braced up by such an atmosphere, do not well bear the continual stress of sight and sound. For here there is no escape from the weight of a perpetual creation; all other forms and motions come and go, the tide rises and recedes, the wind at its mightiest, moves in gales and gusts, but here is really an incessant, an indefatigable motion.

"Awake or asleep there is no escape; still this rushing round you and through you. It is in this way I have most felt the grandeur,—somewhat eternal, if not infinite.

"At times a secondary music rises; the cataract seems to seize

its own rhythm, and sing it over again, so that the ear and soul are roused by a double vibration. This is some effect of the wind, causing echoes to the thundering anthem. It is very sublime, giving the effect of a spiritual repetition through all the spheres."

Although we have never seen Niagara, nor listened to its deafening anthem, we feel the truth of this description; and that is the gift of genius, to enable us to feel the presence of a great man, a stirring heroic event, or sublimity of nature, by means of the poet's soul.

How vigorously she portrays the sentiment which all have felt in the presence of beautiful or sublime scenery!

"But all great expression, which, on a superficial survey, seems so easy as well as so simple, fnrnishes, after a while, to the faithful observer its own standard by which to appreciate it. Daily these proportions widened and towered more and more upon my sight, and I got at last a proper foreground for these sublime distances. Before coming away, I think I really saw the full wonder of the scene. After awhile it so drew me into itself as to inspire an undefined dread, such as I never knew before, such as may be *felt when death is about to usher us into a new existence.*"

Miss Fuller, in her desire to dip the plummet down to the very depths of human nature, has, with her usual boldness, seized upon a presentiment which, no doubt, at particular seasons, has impressed every mind. We pause over her remark in italics, as it affords us an opportunity of noticing that love of psychological illustration which seems to be so natural to her.

This is hardly a place to discuss the mysteries of life and death, but we may perhaps be allowed to remark that this allusion to the vague intimation of a future state is a favorite illustration with our fair writer.

How far these presentiments are based on truth, it is not permitted for the intellect, in its present state, to ascertain. It may be that every birth is a death, and every death a birth; and that, as year succeeds to year, carrying the human race forward in its progress towards its ultimate destiny, so may what we call birth and death be only a process of each individual mind in its journey to perfection. One would think that curiosity alone would enable us to welcome death, seeing that it is the portal to a greater sphere of existence.

While Miss Fuller has a spirit capable of feeling the vastness of her subject, she has also an eye ready to detect the minuter traits of character. After her speculations on the metaphysical parts of our nature, the following, coming immediately after it, reads somewhat outré:

"Once, just as I had seated myself there, a man came to take his first look. He walked close up to the fall, and after looking at it a moment, with an air as if thinking how he could best appropriate it to his own use, *he spat into it.*"

This spitting into a cataract is no mean illustration of the insults occasionally offered to men of genius by the low-minded. The latter act is more frequently indulged in, but it is quite as contemptible an act in one case as the other, and covers the spitter, and not the cataract, with contempt.

This insensibility to grandeur is a common defect, or perhaps we ought to say that the susceptibility to beauty and sublimity is the gift of only the superior nature.

It is related that an English merchant travelling to Mount Vesuvius was so indignant at its not vomiting forth torrents of flame, as he had seen it in pictures, that he snapped his fingers at it, crying, "Vesuvius, you're a humbug!" We prefer the Utilitarian who declared that Etna was a famous place to light a cigar at. It was a similar want of the power of appreciation that induced a Londoner to pronounce that Humboldt was an overrated man, and when asked for evidence to support this novel opinion, he said, with the self-satisfied air of a man who fancies he is settling a disputed point—"Why, you must know, that I dined with him at a friend's the other day, and so long as he was allowed to talk about the Andes, the Himalaya, and places nobody had ever heard of, and in whose existence I don't believe, of course Humboldt had it all his own way; but I settled him. I asked him if he knew where Turnham Green was, and, would you believe it—he didn't know—he was dumbfoundered. I never saw a man look like such a fool before. He is a pretty traveller, to be sure!"

We fear this is the way with the world. They select their own confined local knowledge, or rather ignorance, to test the intellect of a man whose mind grasps a world.

This confounding the squabbling gossip of their own parish with the enlarged politics of the world is a common case with too many.

We need hardly say that to the men who recognise Niagara as only a great water power for turning mills, or as the tailor

did, as a first-rate place for sponging a coat, the writings of Miss Fuller are so much Greek; her mind is of a far different order. She flies higher and dives deeper than those who float upon the surface. There is likewise a great power of association in her nature; she generally brings together one fact to throw light upon another, or to fix it more firmly on the mind by the force of contrast:

"No less strange is the fact that in this neighborhood (of Niagara) an Eagle should be chained for a plaything. When a child, I used often to stand at a window from which I could see an eagle chained in the balcony of a museum. *The people used to poke at it with sticks*, and my childish heart would choke with indignation as I saw their insults, and the mien with which they were borne by the monarch bird. Its eye was dull, and its plumage soiled and shabby, yet in its form and attitude all the king was visible, though sorrowful and dethroned! I never saw another of the family till when passing through the Notch of the White Mountains. At that moment, striving before us in all the panoply of sunset, the driver shouted, 'Look there!' and following with our eyes his upward pointing finger, we saw, soaring slow in majestic poise above the highest summit, the Bird of Jove! It was a glorious sight, yet I know not that I felt more in seeing the bird in all its natural freedom and royalty, than when imprisoned and insulted, he had filled my early thoughts with the Byronic 'silent rays' of misanthropy! Now again I saw him a captive, and addressed by the vulgar with the language they seem to find most appropriate to such occasions—that of thrusts and blows. Silently, his head averted, he ignored their existence, as Plotinus and Sophocles might that of a modern reviewer. Probably he listened to the voice of the cataract, and felt that congenial powers flowed free, and was consoled, though his own wing was broken."

We once heard of a tradesman who had lived to a moderate age without having seen the ocean. He had read about it in the papers, as though it had been an advertisement, and his curiosity was roused to see it, just as he had a desire to know how far Warren's blacking came up to the description of its wonderful powers. A glowing account of a tempest on the coast determined him to judge of the sea by his own senses. Being a cheesemonger, he was accustomed to test everything by the *taste*. On his arrival at Brighton he wrapt himself up carefully, and proceeded to the beach. By degrees he ventured to approach as near to the foam-crested waves as was prudent, and after running after, and then receding from the billows, he cautiously dipped his finger into a wave, and *tasted* it. Making a wry face, as he would over a dose of physic, he returned to his inn, and departed next day for London, with a complete knowledge of the world of waters.

There is also a quiet power about some of Miss Fuller's comic descriptions, which are as effective as any of the absurd distortions of Dickens. The former reaches her object by the quiet *force* of her humor, the other attempts to succeed by the unexpected blow of gross caricature! The true comedian is one who delights his audience with the comic expression of his countenance; it is the clown who raises a laugh with the chalk and red ochre, depending chiefly on an enormous nose, highly painted, and with a fictitious mouth, stretching apparently from ear to ear. We are glad, however, to perceive that this false taste is rapidly declining on both sides the Atlantic. We quote a description of Miss Fuller's evening adventure.

"With us was a young lady who showed herself to have been

bathed in the Britannic fluid wittily described by a late French writer, by the impossibility she experienced of accommodating herself to the indecorums of the scene. We ladies were to sleep in the bar-room, from which its drinking visitors could be ejected only at a late hour. The outer door had no fastening to prevent their return. However, our host kindly requested we would call him, if they did, as he had 'conquered them for us,' and would do so again. We had also rather hard couches (mine was the supper table), but we Yankees, born to rove, were altogether too much fatigued to stand upon trifles, and slept as sweetly as we would in the 'bigly bower' of any baroness. But I think England sat up all night, wrapped in her blanket shawl, and with a neat lace cap upon her head; so that she would have looked perfectly the lady if any one had come in; shuddering and listening. I know that she was very ill next day, in requital. She watched, as her parent country watches the seas, that nobody may do wrong in any case, and deserved to have met some interruption, she was so well prepared. However, there was none, other than from the nearness of some twenty sets of powerful lungs, which would not leave the night to a deadly stillness."

To a poetical mind the commonest occurrence has a meaning which the many never see: there is all the difference in the world between the Hamlets and the Horatios of human nature.

Few men so thoroughly understood the heart as Cervantes and Shakspeare. How singular a coincidence that both these great spirits should leave earth the same day! It seems as though they had been asked to meet, no other men being equal to the task of entertaining each other.

Never did poet so wonderfully condense into two individuals the great classes of mankind as Cervantes has done in Sancho

Panza and his master. While the former represents the common-place of the human family, the other is the sublime embodiment of the chivalrous and the imaginative. Don Quixote is truly of imagination all compact! And how wonderfully does an indulgence in their own natures lower the one down to a greater sensualism, the other intensed and heightened into madness! While the Squire is the representative of worldly wisdom, cunning, and that interested fidelity so prevalent in the world, the knight is a perfect type of the generous, the noble, and the brave-hearted gentleman. In a word, Sancho Panza is the prose, and Don Quixote is the poetry of human nature.

And how wonderfully true to experience is the result of many of the woful knight's philanthropic endeavors! Witness his humane interference in favor of the idle sheep-boy, whom his master thrashed twice as much when Don Quixote had turned his back. No bad illustration of the effect produced on the slave-trade by the "humanity men" of England and America. Notice also the "shaping power of his fancy" when he mistakes windmills for men-at-arms. This is only the imaginative powers carried one step beyond their natural scope. As the poet says:

> "Great genius, sure, to madness is allied,
> And thin partitions do the bounds divide."

And a modern's illustration of beauty may be applied to the mind:

> "One shade the more—one shade the less,
> Had half impaired that nameless grace!"

How subtly the imagination works on itself, none can tell. But that every poet has a madness slumbering in his nature is clear to every self-reflective man.

An appreciation of the beautiful is the first sensation of the poetical mind: that belongs to many. The power of giving that faculty an utterance is the gift of the few: those few are the poets. To Miss Fuller the flight of a flock of pigeons is a music.

"One beautiful feature was the return of the pigeons every afternoon to their home. Every afternoon they came sweeping across the lawn, positively in clouds, and with a swiftness and softness of winged motion, more beautiful than anything of the kind I ever knew. Had I been a musician, such as Mendelssohn, I felt that I could have improvised a music quite peculiar, from the sound they made, which should have indicated all the beauty over which their wings bore them."

To the imagination,

"The meanest flower that blows, can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

How often does the very loftiness of a man's nature lead to the odium of the world, as from an eminence he beholds things the crowd denies, because they cannot see so far on account of their low stature. Much of the objection that has been raised to Miss Fuller's writings has proceeded from this defect in the eyesight of the world. Occasionally that fine woman's instinct, which is a half-revelation, lets us into more of the heart than a volume of man's preaching.

"Oh! it is a curse to woman to love first, or most.
In so doing she reverses the natural relations,
And her heart can never, never be satisfied
With what ensues."

But we refer the reader to the story of Mariana, as related in this little volume; it is one of the most touching and powerfully drawn narrations we have ever met with.

Many half-truth commentators have misrepresented Miss Fuller's theory of the position of woman. We hope it is their ignorance, and not their malice, which has led to this injustice. For our own part, we cordially echo her sentiments, convinced that every day brings us nearer to the realization of her system. After some observations upon Philip Van Artevelde, she says:

"When will this country have such a man? It is what she needs; no thin Idealist, no coarse Realist, but a man whose eye reads the heavens while his feet step firmly on the ground, and his hands are strong and dexterous for the use of human implements. A man religious, virtuous, and—sagacious; a man of universal sympathies, but self-possessed; a man who knows the region of emotion, though he is not its slave; a man to whom this world is no mere spectacle, or fleeting shadow, but a great solemn game to be played with good heed, for its stakes are of eternal value, yet who, if his own play be true, heeds not what he loses by the falsehood of others. A man who hives from the past, yet knows that its honey can but moderately avail him; whose comprehensive eye scans the present, neither infatuated by its golden lures nor chilled by its many ventures; who possesses prescience, as the wise man must, but not so far as to be driven mad to-day by

the gift which discerns to-morrow. When there is such a man for America, the thought which urges her on will be expressed."

Who can deny the following?

"It marks the defect in the position of woman that one like Mariana should have found reason to write thus. To a man of equal power, equal sincerity, no more!—many resources would have presented themselves. He would not have needed to seek, he would have been called by life, and not permitted to be quite wrecked through the affections only. But such women as Mariana are often lost, unless they meet some man of sufficiently great soul to prize them."

And where is the political economist who contradicts this?

"Might the simple maxim, that honesty is the best policy, be laid to heart! Might a sense of the true aims of life elevate the tone of politics and trade, till public and private honor become identical! Might the western man, in that crowded and exciting life which developes his faculties so fully for to-day, not forget that better part which could not be taken from him! Might the western woman take that interest and acquire that light for the education of the children, for which she alone has leisure!

"This is indeed the great problem of the place and time. If the next generation be well prepared for their work, ambitious of good and skilful to achieve it, the children of the present settlers may be leaven enough for the mass constantly increasing by emigration. And how much is this needed where those rude foreigners can so little understand the best interests of the land they seek for bread and shelter! It would be a happiness to aid in this good work, and interweave the white and golden threads into the fate of Illinois. It would be a work worthy the devotion of any mind."

Whatever be the subject she thinks for herself, and boldly gives her opinion, without reference to the popular feeling. We were glad to read this:

"At Detroit we stopped for half a day. This place is famous in our history, and the unjust anger at its surrender is still expressed by almost every one who passes there. I had always shared the common feelings on this subject; for the indignation at a disgrace to our arms that seemed so unnecessary, has been handed down from father to child, and few of us have taken the pains to ascertain where the blame lay. But now, upon the spot, having read all the testimony, I felt convinced that it should rest solely with the government, which, by neglecting to sustain General Hull, as he had a right to expect they would, compelled him to take this step, or sacrifice many lives, and of the defenceless inhabitants, not of soldiers, to the cruelty of a savage foe, for the sake of his reputation.

"I am a woman, and unlearned in such affairs; but, to a person with common sense and good eyesight, it is clear, when viewing the location, that, under the circumstances, he had no prospect of successful defence, and that to attempt it would have been an act of vanity, not valor.

"I feel that I am not biased in this judgment by my personal relations, for I have always heard both sides, and, though my feelings had been moved by the picture of the old man sitting down, in the midst of his children, to a retired and despoiled old age after a life of honor and happy intercourse with the public, yet tranquil, always secure that justice must be done at last, I supposed, like others, that he deceived himself, and deserved to pay the penalty for failure to the responsibility he had undertaken. Now on the spot, I change, and believe the country at large must,

ere long, change from this opinion. And I wish to add my testimony, however trifling its weight, before it be drowned in the voice of general assent, that I may do some justice to the feelings which possessed me here and now."

In Miss Fuller's essay on "Milton" we recognise that clear bold spirit, which smiles at the timidity, too frequent, when treating on the most original men of the past.

"Mr. Griswold justly and wisely observes:—'Milton is more emphatically *American* than any author who has lived in the United States.' He is so because in him is expressed so much of the primitive vitality of that thought from which America is born, though at present disposed to forswear her lineage in so many ways. He is the purity of Puritanism. He understood the nature of liberty, of justice—what is required for the unimpeded action of conscience—what constitutes true marriage, and the scope of a manly education. He is one of the Fathers of this Age, of that new Idea which agitates the sleep of Europe, and of which America, if awake to the design of Heaven and her own duty, would become the principal exponent. But the Father is still far beyond the understanding of his child.

"His ideas of marriage, as expressed in the treatises on Divorce, are high and pure. He aims at a marriage of souls. If he incline too much to the prerogative of his own sex, it was from that mannishness, almost the same with boorishness, that is evident in men of the greatest and richest natures, who have never known the refining influence of happy, mutual love, as the best women evince narrowness and poverty under the same privation. In every line we see how much Milton required the benefit of 'the thousand decencies that daily flow' from such a relation, and how greatly he

would have been a gainer by it, both as man and as genius. In his mind lay originally the fairest ideal of woman; to see it realized would have 'finished his education.' *His* commonwealth could only have grown from the perfecting of individual men. The private means to such an end he rather hints than states in the short essay to Education. They are such as we are gradually learning to prize. Healthful diet, varied bodily exercises, to which we no longer need give the martial aim he proposed, fit the mind for studies which are by him arranged in a large, plastic, and natural method."

Milton's doctrine of marriage has too often been confounded with the special pleading of his "Treatise on Divorce:" not but in time there is little doubt that all the world will have come to his conclusions even on that subject.

We have the highest authority for believing that "man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man;" and even do we believe that marriage was instituted to conduce to human happiness, and not to prove a principle, or an abstract right.

It has been said that the laws regulating the union of the sexes are the result of six thousand years' experience, and should not be lightly tampered with. This argument can be made to answer every effort to improve the condition of the human family.

After all, these questions must be decided by fresh discoveries, which are constantly breaking upon us, just as our physical nature is being regulated by new facts in surgery and chemistry. There is a science in one case as indisputable as in the other, and the ethics of a hundred years ago is now obsolete.

The more mankind is venerated, the less will be the respect shown to the "outworn creeds" of the dark ages. The masses respect a venerable blunder more than they do the most brilliant discovery of modern times.

That Miss Fuller has full faith in the future is very evident from every page of her writings; she is not a mere echo of the prevalent opinion, but has a bold independent voice of her own, filled with her own thought.

What she says of Coleridge is very true, and expresses the opinion of many of the deepest thinkers of England.

"Give Coleridge a canvas, and he will paint a single mood as if his colors were made of the mind's own atoms. Here he is very unlike Southey. There is nothing of the spectator about Coleridge; he is all life; not impassioned, not vehement, but searching, intellectual life, which seems 'listening through the frame' to its own pulses.

"I have little more to say at present except to express a great, though not fanatical veneration for Coleridge, and a conviction that the benefits conferred by him on this and future ages are as yet incalculable. Every mind will praise him for what it can best receive from him. He can suggest to an infinite degree; he can *in*form, but he cannot *re*form and renovate. To the unprepared he is nothing; to the prepared, everything. Of him may be said what he said of nature:

'We receive but what we give,
In kind though not in measure.'

"I was once requested, by a very sensible and excellent personage, to explain what is meant by 'Christabel' and 'The Ancient Mariner.' I declined the task. I had not then seen Coleridge's

answer to a question of similar tenor from Mrs. Barbauld, or I should have referred to that as an expression, not altogether unintelligible, of the discrepancy which must exist between those minds which are commonly styled *rational* (as the received definition of *common* sense is insensibility to *uncommon* sense), and that of Coleridge. As to myself, if I understand nothing beyond the execution of those 'singularly wild and original poems,' I could not tell my gratitude for the degree of refinement which Taste has received from them. To those who cannot understand the voice of Nature or Poetry, unless it speak in apothegms, and tag each story with a moral, I have nothing to say. My own greatest obligation to Coleridge I have already mentioned. It is for his suggestive power that I thank him."

We are glad to have so true-hearted a woman as Margaret Fuller confirming the opinion on the drama we have expressed in both this volume and our previous one on the "Living Authors of England."

"The drama cannot die out: it is too naturally born of certain periods of national development. It is a stream that will sink in one place, only to rise to light in another. As it has appeared successively in Hindostan, Greece (Rome we cannot count), England, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, so has it yet to appear in New Holland, New Zealand, among ourselves, when we too shall be made new by a sunrise of our own, when our population shall have settled into a homogeneous, national life, and we have attained vigor to walk in our own way, make our own world, and leave off copying Europe.

"At present our attempts are, for the most part, feebler than those of the British 'After Muse,' for our play-wrights are not from youth so fancy-fed by the crumbs that fall from the tables of

the lords of literature, and having no relish for the berries of our own woods, the roots of our own fields, they are meagre, and their works bodiless; yet, as they are pupils of the British school, their works need not be classed apart, and I shall mention one or two of the most note-worthy by-and-by."

But it is not alone in a critical light that she shows her clear instinct; it is also in matters of feeling. How noble and how womanly is her breaking out into the following eulogium on Browning's female creations!

"We bless the poet for these pictures of women, which, however the common tone of society, by the grossness and levity of the remarks bandied from tongue to tongue, would seem to say the contrary, declare there is still in the breasts of men a capacity for pure and exalting passion,—for immortal tenderness."

And how true is her reference to the old crime of "Hero-Murder."

"But the shrewd, worldly spy, the supplanted rival, the woman who was guilty of that lowest baseness of wishing to make of a lover the tool of her purposes, all grow better by seeing the action of this noble creature under the crucifixion they have prepared for him; especially the feelings of the rival, who learns from his remorse to understand genius and magnanimity, are admirably depicted. Such repentance always comes too late for one injured; men kill him first, then grow wiser and mourn; this dreadful and frequent tragedy is shown in Luria's case with its full weight of dark significance, spanned by the rainbow beauty that springs from the perception of truth and nobleness in the victim."

In her remarks on American Literature we heartily coincide,

so far as they are general; with respect to her estimate of some of its authors we very much differ.

"For it does not follow because many books are written by persons born in America that there exists an American literature. Books which imitate or represent the thoughts and life of Europe, do not constitute an American literature. Before such can exist, an original idea must animate this nation, and fresh currents of life must call into life fresh thoughts along its shores."

The first step towards the cure of a disease is to be aware of its existence. In like manner the want is known, let the public encourage those who can supply it.

The injurious tendency of any nation depending upon another for its *reading* is evident, more especially when the reading nation is a republic, and the author nation a monarchy.

"Yet there is, often, between child and parent, a reaction from excessive influence having been exerted, and such an one we have experienced, in behalf of our country, against England. We use her language, and receive, in torrents, the influence of her thought, yet it is, in many respects, uncongenial and injurious to our constitution. What suits Great Britain, with her insular position and consequent need to concentrate and intensify her life, her limited monarchy, and spirit of trade, does not suit a mixed race, continually enriched with new blood from other stocks the most unlike that of our first descent, with ample field and verge enough to range in and leave every impulse free, and abundant opportunity to develope a genius, wide and full as our rivers, flowery, luxuriant, and impassioned as our vast prairies, rooted in strength as the rocks on which the Puritan fathers landed."

We have been much struck with the manner in which Miss

Fuller, in a few lines, throws off a sketch of an author. They have all some prominent features which speak a likeness.

How seldom does a critic write so justly of a contemporary as we have here before us.

"R. W. Emerson, in melody, in subtle beauty of thought and expression, takes the highest rank upon this list. But his poems are mostly philosophical, which is not the truest kind of poetry. They want the simple force of nature and passion, and, while they charm the ear and interest the mind, fail to wake far-off echoes in the heart. The imagery wears a symbolical air, and serves rather as illustration, than to delight us by fresh and glowing forms of life."

We regret that our fair critic was not more generous in her estimation of Lowell. We hope to be able in our next volume, the second series of American authors, to give a reason for our faith as regards Mr. Lowell, which is totally at variance with Miss Fuller.

We dismiss these desultory remarks on American literature with the following passage from her writings:

"That day will not rise till the fusion of races among us is more complete. It will not rise till this nation shall attain sufficient moral and intellectual dignity to prize moral and intellectual, no less highly than political freedom; not till the physical resources of the country being explored, all its regions studded with towns, broken by the plough, netted together by railways and telegraph lines, talent shall be left at leisure to turn its energies upon the higher department of man's existence. Nor then shall it be seen, till from the leisurely and yearning soul of that riper time national

ideas shall take birth, ideas craving to be clothed in a thousand fresh and original forms.

"Without such ideas all attempts to construct a national literature must end in abortions like the monster of Frankenstein, things with forms, and the instincts of forms, but soulless, and therefore revolting. We cannot have expression till there is something to be expressed.

"The symptoms of such a birth may be seen in a longing felt here and there for the sustenance of such ideas. At present, it shows itself, where felt, in sympathy with the prevalent tone of society, by attempts at external action, such as are classed under the head of social reform. But it needs to go deeper, before we can have poets; needs to penetrate beneath the springs of action, to stir and remake the soil as by the action of fire.

"Another symptom is the need felt by individuals of being even sternly sincere. This is the one great means by which alone progress can be essentially furthered. This is the nursing mother of genius. No man can be absolutely true to himself, eschewing cant, compromise, servile imitation, and complaisance, without becoming original, for there is in every creature a fountain of life which, if not choked back by stones and other dead rubbish, will create a fresh atmosphere, and bring to life fresh beauty. And it is the same with the nation as with the individual man."

Our readers cannot fail noticing the clearness of our fair critic's style: there is no useless ornament; it is transparent prose, which developes the subject clearly in all its proportions.

We have, however, seen in her "Summer on the Lakes" that when her subject demands a more glowing style she is fully equal to the occasion.

One of the most charming compositions we have read for a

long time is that entitled "The Two Herberts." It is, however, of a kind which demands the justice of a full perusal; we therefore offer only one extract, affording proof of Miss Fuller's interest in the old country and its noble cavaliers.

"The two forms were faithful expressions of their several lives. There was a family likeness between them, for they shared in that beauty of the noble English blood, of which, in these days, few types remain: the Norman tempered by the Saxon, the fire of conquest by integrity, and a self-contained, inflexible habit of mind. In the time of the Sydneys and Russells, the English body was a strong and nobly-proportioned vase, in which shone a steady and powerful, if not brilliant light.

"The chains of convention, an external life grown out of proportion with that of the heart and mind, have destroyed, for the most part, this dignified beauty. There is no longer, in fact, an aristocracy in England, because the saplings are too puny to represent the old oak. But that it once existed, and did stand for what is best in that nation, any collection of portraits from the sixteenth century will show."

We must venture to differ from her decision when she gives to Walter Scott a "strong imagination." We are inclined to consider his characteristics as great invention, constructiveness, and objectivity of dialogues. Invention is the mechanical part of imagination. Imagination includes invention, just as the idea of a living man takes in the physical as the vehicle of the spiritual. We feel inclined to say that invention is to imagination what prose is to poetry. We are almost ashamed to quote one author so often to help out our own short-comings of description, but Shakspeare is the most perfect type of imagina-

tion, and Scott of invention. The one is the king of the first class of intellect; the other the indisputable head of the second class. We venture to say, the more this position is examined the more it will be acknowledged.

In Shakspeare's writings it will be seen that his characters, whether they be Hamlet, Bottom, Macbeth, or Slender, are always the very head of their class, the very poetry of their nature, viz. the highest individualization possible to reach. This intensity, without an overstraining or even apparent effort, is undoubtedly the reason why every day spreads wider the renown of the great dramatist: it is like a circle ever extending. It is also a singular coincidence with nature herself, whose productions, whether a star, a flower, a drop of water, or an animalcule, challenge the most elaborate and microscopical examination.

We do not, however, quarrel with Miss Fuller for her confounding invention with imagination; we merely point it out as a simple difference of opinion, and leave the public to decide the point.

Miss Fuller's poetry partakes of her independent nature, and offers a remarkable contrast to that sickly and insipid verse which has of late years inundated the reading world.

In the following specimen we have an earnest of that clearness of thought and justness of diction so rare in poetry, and more especially in the productions of female writers.

"Farewell, ye soft and sumptuous solitudes!
Ye fairy distances, ye lordly woods,
Haunted by paths like those that Poussin knew,
When after his all gazers' eyes he drew:

I go,—and if I never more may steep
An eager heart in your enchantments deep,
Yet ever to itself that heart may say,
Be not exacting; thou hast lived one day;
Hast looked on that which matches with thy mood,
Impassioned sweetness of full being's flood,
Where nothing checked the bold yet gentle wave,
Where naught repelled the lavish love that gave.
A tender blessing lingers o'er the scene,
Like some young mother's thought, fond, yet serene,
And through its life new-born our lives have been.
Once more farewell,—a sad, a sweet farewell;
And, if I never must behold you more,
In other worlds I will not cease to tell
The rosary I here have numbered o'er;
And bright-haired Hope will lend a gladdened ear,
And love will free him from the grasp of Fear,
And Gorgon critics, while the tale they hear,
Shall dew their stony glances with a tear,
If I but catch one echo from your spell;—
And so farewell,—a grateful, sad farewell!"

There is no attempt at grandiloquence in these verses; most of those we have read on the same theme are written too much in the "Ercles vein." Poets produce greater effect by simplicity than by those turgid words which are too frequently mistaken for fine poetry.

For a great author Coleridge has sinned most against this law in his "religious musings," and even in that magnificent anthem to Chamouni, beginning

"Hast thou a charm to stay the morning star,
So long thou seemest to pause," &c.

There are many phrases which trench upon good taste, and overstep the modesty of Nature. It is easy to perceive when a poet's heart is *not* in his subject, by the number of gaudy epithets and elaborate metaphors; the effect of one is a certain proof of the absence of the other.

Great effects are frequently produced by the simplest words. Who can refrain from admiring the vividness of this image from Watts's Hymns?

"For Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest sinner on his knees!"

This has always appeared to us as suggestive as any two lines ever written. The cowering of the grand monarch of abstract evil before a penitent is a noble image. The very attitude of humiliation to God being the overtowering defiance of the great enemy!

Of a similar class of condensed suggestiveness is the line in Green's Poem of the Spleen. Alluding to the efficacy to exercise in that complaint, the Poet says,

"Throw but a *stone* the *Giant* dies!"

A finer allusion to the combat between David and Goliah has never been made. Our recollection suggests another piece of the bold sculpture of Thought, by a few dashes of the chisel. It is from Collins's "Ode to Fear."

"Danger, whose limbs of giant mould,
What mortal eye can fixed behold?
Who stalks his round, a hideous form,
Howling amidst the midnight storm,
Or throws him on the ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep!"

It is needless to comment on the two last lines; there is a world of fear in the simple attitude.

We must give one more instance of the felicitous power of a few words, naturally placed, to produce a great idea. Alluding to the fate of Richard the Second, who was starved to death, Gray says:—

"Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest."

Our space will not allow us to analyse "The Women of the Nineteenth Century." It is the less necessary, as it displays the same characteristics as Miss Fuller's other writings.

It is an additional evidence of her freshness of mind, and fearlessness of testifying to the truth, as it appears to her. However unpalatable and strange the opinions she advocates now appear, we feel pretty certain every year will bring the world nearer to their recognition, and the wonder then will be how any rational being could have doubted them.

We should not be giving a complete portrait of Miss Fuller if we were to omit noticing her capabilities as a traveller, and an observant visitor of foreign lands; in this respect her letters to the "Tribune" are admirable specimens of observation. We were much amused at the humorous hints she occasionally throws out on the distribution of labor between the sexes. Lamb had the same notion that mankind never could pretend to any "gallantry," so long as they allowed the housemaids to do all the work. Miss Fuller seems inclined to turn the lords of creation into washerwomen.

"The Reform Club was the only one of those splendid establishments that I visited. Certainly the force of comfort can no further go, nor can anything be better contrived to make dressing, eating, news-getting, and even sleeping (for there are bed-rooms as well as dressing-rooms for those who will), be got through with as glibly as possible. Yet to me this palace of so many 'single gentlemen rolled into one,' seemed stupidly comfortable in the absence of that elegant arrangement and vivacious atmosphere which only Women can inspire. In the kitchen, indeed, I met them, and on that account it seemed the pleasantest part of the building—though, even there they are but the servants of servants. There reigned supreme a genius in his way, who has published a work on Cookery, and around him his pupils—young men who pay a handsome yearly fee for novitiate under his instruction. I am not sorry, however, to see men predominant in the cooking department, as I hope to see that and washing transferred to their care in the progress of things, since they are 'the stronger sex.'

"The arrangements of this kitchen were very fine, combining great convenience with neatness, and even elegance. Fourier himself might have taken pleasure in them. Thence we passed into the private apartments of the artist, and found them full of pictures by his wife, an artist in another walk. One or two of them had been engraved. *She* was an Englishwoman.

"We also get a glimpse, returning from a John Gilpin pilgrimage to Edmonton, of the residence of the German poet Freiligrath.

"'Returning, we passed the house where Freiligrath finds a temporary home, earning the bread of himself and his family in a commercial house. England houses the exile, but not without house-tax, window-tax, and head-tax. Where is the Arcadia that dares invite all genius to her arms, and change her golden wheat for their green laurels and immortal flowers? Arcadia—would the name were America!'"

Whenever a man of genius speaks to the public, in proportion as he is true to his own nature he must offend theirs. It is not possible to serve God and mammon: equally impossible is it to preach against the prevalence of error, and not to rouse the priests of Baal, and their crowds of believers. This has been the history of the human mind. As the poet says:

> "The truth for which some great-souled martyr died
> In the past age, burned and crucified,
> Becomes in time the bigot's sacred creed,
> And bids in turn the future doubter bleed!"

Any book that rouses no discussion is needless; it is in fact an impertinence. Why stop the public in Broadway to tell them what they know, or echo some old opinion?

It is evidently the wish of Miss Fuller to join issue with the common-place, and to speak out her own nature firmly, though with a becoming deference to the old worn-out creeds of humanity. It is a striking proof of the blindness of the world, that, although it owes every blessing to those men who boldly in bygone times spoke out new opinions, it nevertheless precisely imitates the conduct of those persecutors, whom they are in the constant habit of branding as bigoted and sanguinary fiends. Do these shortsighted human bats never reflect that in a few years their own children will be compelled to regard them in the same odious light? Let the public reflect ere they draw down the anathema of posterity.

These remarks have been forced from us by the charge we have heard brought against our gifted authoress of being a socialist and a sceptic! Of all egotisms that which denies to an-

other the right of forming and holding an opinion either in morals, politics, religion, or taste, is the most ignorant and diabolical. Were it not for the fatal effects of such arrogance, it would be too ludicrous for anything save contempt; but it unfortunately happens that the innate love of cruelty which so marks man from the rest of the brute creation, is enabled, by appealing to this egotism, to select some of the noblest of God's creatures for victims. Man is cruel by nature; it is reflection that modifies him into humanity. A modern poet, in some verses, has made a parallel between a cruel boy and the grown-up world. Alluding to the favorite pastime of youth to impale an insect on a pin, and then enjoy its flutterings, he says:

> "I hardly know, dear reader, which is safer,
> To be a genius or a cockchafer!"

The slightest reflection must convince the most bigoted person that it is the height of profanity and danger to deny to any man his birthright of thought. In the first place, who gave the bigot a patent to act the Omniscient on earth? He is as likely to be wrong as his fellow-man! For every one is equally certain that he is right! It is dangerous, for the bigot becomes responsible for the faith of the man he coerces! It is profane, because the bigot usurps the throne of God, to whom we are alone responsible for our conscience! We shall not dwell on this point, for those who refuse assent to the first article of freedom, will not be persuaded though "one rise from the dead!" We cannot, however, help one closing remark that of all nations the American ought to be the most tolerant

since it owes its existence to those noble-minded men who fled from persecution to find freedom and toleration in the New World; and who, in after years, when tyranny followed them to their new home, went forth to battle, and with the pebble of Truth in the sling of Freedom laid low at their feet the giant Goliah of the world.

We conclude our notice of Miss Fuller by confessing that she is one of those few authors who have written too little. We hope to read more of her prose, so thoughtful and vigorous; and of her poetry, at once so graceful, yet so strong and simple.

We regret that the scope of this volume will not allow us to consider her as a politician. In this character, however, she is familiar to all those who read the "Tribune"—a journal which has of late sullied its high reputation for dignity and forbearance by indulging in personal attacks, and suffering itself to be converted from a great organ of truth to a vehicle of individual malignity.

MRS. C. M. KIRKLAND.

AMERICA has produced few women superior to the authoress of "Western Clearings," "A New Home, Who'll Follow?" "Forest Life," and "Holidays Abroad." There is a clear, bright intellect displayed in her writings generally, which inevitably compels us to respect her conclusions, however much we may differ from them. This we do in many points, and in some to a great extent.

We shall commence with her last work, "Holidays Abroad," and present to our readers those parts which seem to illustrate most pointedly those peculiarities which constitute the individuality of Mrs. Kirkland.

Nature seems to possess the faculty of the kaleidoscope in never producing the same aspect twice. However much men and women may appear to resemble each other, the difference is as distinct as though they belonged to separate races. This is a conclusive reason why a man of intellect never despises the lowest of his fellow creatures. Every one is an undiscovered world, infinitely more wonderful than a new planet. When we remember into how few elements human nature is resolved, the imagination is not capable of realizing the countless variety of

individuals produced by a different combination of the passions. We may illustrate this in a faint degree by observing that out of twenty-five letters Shakspeare and the poets have produced all those marvellous creations which constitute the realm of thought.

When we take into account the variety of human passions, the senses, the modifications of climate, the different ages of the world, the disturbing influences of creeds, whether of religion, politics, or taste, and then multiply all these by the countless accidents of circumstances, we shall find a numerous alphabet of creative facts and elements, out of which nature can form that great dictionary of men—the human race—that wonderful language of which every word is a living and immortal being.

We met with some verses lately in a manuscript poem, which reverse this illustration. Without vouching for the philosophy they embody, we quote them:

"'Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' this knells
The common lot; but it is ink to ink,
Paper to paper, pen to pen, which tells
The fate of those who sing, and those who think.
The poet moulders into syllables,
And from his tomb of Russia, silk, or calf,
Still makes all human nature weep or laugh."

Mrs. Kirkland is one of the few travellers who have avoided the old stereotyped plan of diluting the "Guide Book," and plagiarizing the "Catalogues of Art." In her preface she says: "I was obliged to make a compromise with modesty, by secretly vowing to resist all temptations to put anything in my book

which could be suspected of an intent to convey information, properly so called! A faithful reading of Murray's Guide Books will give more of that than one can use."

This is the avowal of a woman of a superior intellect, a scorner of the commonplace; and it is infinitely preferable to have the impressions left on such a mind by the new aspects continually presented to her by foreign countries, than a tedious detail of the statistics of the places she has visited.

Our fair traveller's enthusiasm is very creditable to her feelings, but we are too frequently reminded by the largeness of her admiration, that she is expressing her astonishment rather than her critical opinion.

She is certainly one of the warmest admirers of England that it has been our fortune to meet. How truly the impulsive woman's nature is shown in the following apostrophe!

"Who shall describe the exquisite delight with which the land is welcomed at the termination of a first voyage across the ocean! To see mere earth, though it were but a handful, enough to smell and to feel, were something! but to see land, and know that it is the land towards which your curiosity, gratitude, and affections, your nursery songs, your school stories, your academic education, your studies in history, your whole literary experience, have been directing and drawing you from your cradle; to see before you the shores of 'merry England,' the country of Alfred, and old Canute, and Robin Hood, and Mother Goose—the land whose Christmas and Twelfth-night revels Washington Irving made so unspeakably fascinating to our imagination—the land of Shakspeare, and of Shakspeare's creatures—the only Englishmen of the ages gone as much alive now as they ever were; England! the country to which appertain the glorious ages of Anne and Elizabeth, and the splendid

names that are blazing round those queens, and lending them a more substantial royalty in the imaginations of men, than they ever exercised in their own right; England! the *Old*-country, the Mother-country—land of our fathers—fountain of our liberties—source of our laws; from whose full bosom we have not ceased to draw the milk of gentle letters, though we spurned her maternal claim to rule us; England! the home of the noblest race earth has ever borne; the scene of a civilization without a parallel since time was. What educated American can first see the coast of England, without such a thrill as life is too short, and the heart too narrow, to afford many as keen, and deep, and universal!"

After the discomforts of a sea voyage we can well understand the exaggeration of sentimental feeling which the sight of land must raise, but Mrs. Kirkland's philosophy or good sense ought to save her from presenting this magnified appearance as a reality. Admiration and enthusiasm are fearful microscopes!

She possesses the power of presenting in a few words those mental sensations which so many have felt, but so few have well expressed. How truly she observes—"When we stop at Chester, we seem to have plunged at once into some crypt, so subterranean do its dark streets appear after the *riant* freshness of the country!"

To an American fresh from the right-angular streets of Philadelphia and New York, we doubt not the queer, old, tumble-down gabled houses of an old country town appeared strange. We are, however, somewhat amused at her considering them the Father of Romance. There is a romance to every age, and it springs from the mind and not from the matter; from men's hearts and not from their houses. In a hun-

dred years our posterity will doubtless smile at the romantic chivalry of the nineteenth century, although it would now puzzle the shrewdest observer of human nature to find anything resembling it, according to the present standard. Railway speculations in a few centuries may be considered in the same light as the Crusades are now, and an act of generosity may be put on a parallel with the heroism of Curtius, who fell into a common sewer, or of Mucius Scævola, who burned his fingers at King Porsenna's fire. Many antiquated persons groan over the alleged decay of romance and poetry. They would have done the same had they been living in the days of Sesostris, Alexander the Great, Robin Hood, Tom Thumb, or any other Gogs and Magogs of the shadowy and fictitious past. If these admirers of the antediluvian would walk face foremost, and use their eyes, instead of turning their backs upon the future, like Moses on Pisgah, looking on the wilderness instead of towards the promised land, they would see there was more romance in a steam-engine and more poetry in a railway than either in a warrior on his charger, clad in complete steel, or in a bower full of ladies, listening to some young vagabond of a troubadour. Every age grows more and more poetical and romantic, until we shall reach the perfection of both in the world to come. We hope this assurance will comfort Mrs. Kirkland, and its realization make amends for the inevitable demolition of the tumble-down houses of Chester. We will let her speak for herself.

"As you walk the streets you see how Romance was born in England. Instead of great staring rows of houses, in the plan of whose fronts all shadow is excluded as if it were death, we have

here upper stories projecting over the street, or in default of these, deep recesses with only a railing in front, where the family appear at their various occupations of business or pleasure—mothers getting their children ready for school, maids sweeping and dusting, and the like. It is as if the whole second story were drawn back some ten or twelve feet, leaving a shaded parlor without a front,—an arrangement so contrary to the modern exclusiveness which prompts a blank white linen curtain to protect even the backs of the chairs from the view of the passers-by, that we felt it to be symbolical of older and freer and more natural times. Some of the people we saw in these recesses were fit for pictures; and one old lady whom we observed as she appeared to be dismissing her grandson on an errand with many cautions, looked and moved just as people do on the stage, in character, when they desire to seem old and quaint. Indeed we see now where the old style of stage-dresses came from—they were faithful transcripts of real life in England. We had supposed the monstrous cap-border surmounted by a red bow, the gown tucked up to the waist, the flounced apron, the short sleeves and coarse black mitts, the length of black ankle, and the high-heeled shoe, were only the ideal of an old English woman of the lower class; we find them here on the very woman herself, as she moves about in every-day life. The picturesque in costume is so completely unknown in our country, where society is macadamized, as it were, that the peculiarities and individualities of English outer life form a perpetual source of amusement and interest for us, especially in these older country towns. Every man, woman, and child, seems to dress without the least reference to anybody else, wearing exactly what taste or convenience may dictate. We are inclined to hope it may be long before the roller of fashion passes over them, crushing all this variety, till daily life resembles a huge skating-pond, whose only inequality of surface consists in the flourishes cut by a few expert skaters."

She abounds with little bits of "word-painting" which are very felicitous. She says, "We asked for a fire, and after some time were served with a smoke." A little further on Mrs. Kirkland makes an admission which lets us into the foundation of her romance. Breakfast, it appears, is a primary element therein:

"But a Coventry breakfast is soon dispatched, so we made our way to the railway station in good time, scarcely waiting to admire the really pretty old town as we passed. It is wonderful indeed that a bad breakfast can so starve out one's romance; but all we shall remember of Coventry will be our many resolutions of never sending any of our friends there."

One of the peculiarities in the American people which most surprises an Englishman on first coming among them, is their perfect familiarity with all the idioms and local allusions of the old country; their intimate acquaintance also with their politics shows an infinite superiority of knowledge in the masses over the English people. They may not possibly have so many profound scholars, but for the diffusion of practical learning there is no comparison between the two countries. Mrs. Kirkland, in the conclusion to the above quotation, turns her knowledge of old English proverbs to good account.

In the next page our traveller allows, despite her admiration of the shell of romance, viz. the tumble down houses of Chester—"Any attempt to reproduce the outward semblance of that grand old style, when the spirit from which it emanated has departed, has a would-be air, false and heartless: no nearer to true dignity than the Chinese villa of the cit, or the paste-diamonds of the soubrette!"

She has a true artist's feeling of the poetical suggestiveness of a *natural ruin*, when she says:

"Kenilworth is all the better and more satisfactory view, from there being so little of it, comparatively. There are just landmarks enough to serve the purpose of fancy. As everything is better conveyed or expressed by means of the inherent poetry or philosophy of it, so is the Kenilworth of Elizabeth's days more completely restored to us by these few remaining towers and walls, than it could have been if every battlement were standing unbroken; as witness that one beautiful gate-tower so nicely fitted up and made perfect, which excites so little feeling in the observer. Dilapidation is in truth a voucher for the reasonableness of our interest. A ruin mended up is a vexatious impertinence, in spite of all we may say of the piety of the thing. Who likes to look upon rouge and brown curls on the octogenarian?"

And her eye for artificial scenery is displayed when she says:

"English landscape has a minutely-finished look; it lacks grandeur; its features are delicate, and the impression left is that of softness and gentle beauty. The grass grows to the very rim of the water, like carpet to a rich drawing-room, which must not betray an inch of unadorned floor. The fields are rolled to a perfect smoothness; the hedges look as if they had no use but beauty; the trees and multitudinous vines have a draperied air, and strike the eye rather as part of the charming whole than as possessing an individual interest. We have seen woodlands in the far west that were far more gracefully majestic than any we have yet seen in England; but we have no such miles of cultured and close-fitted scenery. Nature with us throws on her clothes negligently,

confident in beauty; in England she has evidently looked in the glass until not a curl strays from its fillet, not a dimple is unschooled. She is *mise à quatre épingles*, as the French milliners say; but how lovely!"

We purposely say "artificial scenery," for, with a few exceptions, there is scarcely a bit of uncultivated nature in all England. She has no naked scenery; it has all been dressed up, put into special attitudes, and grouped so as to form the best possible "tout ensemble." It has no more real nature in it than a garden, to which it is so often compared: like a little woman, she is obliged to make the most of a pretty face and agreeable person, by the elaboration of her toilet, the judicious arrangement of her ornaments, and the elegance of her manners. She cannot afford to have a curl awry or a ribbon misplaced, while a Patagonian Venus of six feet or so can afford to leave the impression to her stature.

The common-place feeling which some have for ruins is well illustrated by an incident related by a gentleman who was himself the happy possessor of one. Having invited some antiquarians to inspect it, he told his steward to have all arranged by the day in question. On arriving at the venerable relic of the feudal ages they were astounded by the modernization it had evidently undergone: it was elegantly whitewashed, carpets laid down, chairs and tables placed, and some curtains hung to give a snug air to the sublimity in question. The steward broke the speechless astonishment of the party by saying: "Your Lordship must allow I have much improved their appearance, and made them decent!"

To return to Mrs. Kirkland.

There is another feature in her criticism which we admire, and that is her freedom from the cant of classicality, which has had so fatal an influence on art and literature over all the world. We were delighted to meet with the following passage, as it coincides with the opinion of many of the best critics in Europe.

"The monuments have a modern air, and poor Dr. Johnson looks particularly forlorn, with nothing on but a sheet, as if he had been called out of bed by the cry of fire. This matter of drapery for statues becomes a subject of incessant question as one walks through these monumental aisles. The wig and buckles of Dr. Johnson would not certainly be very classical; but he is not Dr. Johnson without them, and we desire nobody else as we stand near his grave. The equestrian statue of George III., which the wits say is

'a ridiculous thing,
All horse-tail and pig-tail, and not an inch of king!'

is not a whit more ridiculous than the figure of Dr. Johnson in a costume, or non-costume, which would have been odious to him while living. If it was necessary to wind him in a sheet he should have been represented as dead, and so unable to put himself in more proper trim for sitting to the artist."

What gives such an interest to the sculptured forms of the old crusaders, as they lie in dim cathedrals, carved in complete mail, but the exactness of the resemblance? What should we say of the sculptor of that time had he put them into Roman or Turkish costume? The artist might with as much propriety change the features as the dress! One be-

longs to the man, the other to the country in which he lived. The combination forms the complete idea of the individual which was to be demonstrated. Looking at the statues of celebrated men we should define the art of sculpture to be invented for the express purpose of disguising them from the knowledge of posterity, seeing their very contemporaries cannot recognise them. Barbarous as it may sound we must exclaim, Give us the pigtail of George the Third in preference to the toga of Samuel Johnson!

We doubt if they would know themselves again if they looked in a glass; more especially as it sometimes happens that a man who is dressed in a manner unlike his usual style may mistake himself in the glass for some one else. Incredible as it may appear, we know this happened to the father of a very popular writer of the low school of literature.

The gentleman in question volunteered to distribute the playbills on the night of a grand amateur performance, which was given for the benefit of an institution which was drooping for want of funds. While he was busily engaged in his vocation, with a huge bundle of the aforesaid prospectuses in his hand, he was accosted by some person connected with the theatre; turning suddenly round he was astonished by observing that a short, stout gentleman, in an ample white waistcoat, was standing before him with the identical bundle of papers in his hand. Thinking the person had taken them from him, he demanded in an angry tone: "What the devil do you mean, sir, by taking those papers from me?" A narrower inspection convinced him he was beginning to quarrel with his own image in a large mirror, which he had not previously observed. Some

bystanders were heartily amused at this novel method of getting up an altercation.

The stout gentleman in question explains it away by stating that he was very busy, that he had no idea of there being a looking-glass so near, and that seldom dressing in a white waistcoat, he lost for a minute his own identity; hence the mistake, which principally turned upon a difference in costume. His friends consider that a few glasses of champagne had more to do with it than the looking-glass. At all events, if it takes so little to prevent a man recognising himself, we may form a faint idea of the small chance our posterity have when they come to look upon us under the almost impenetrable disguise of a classical costume.

While we are on the subject of the Amateur Plays we may as well quote an apropos passage from her book, which seems to countenance the current belief that the author of "Pickwick" was at an early period of his life a strolling player.

"The amateur plays came off finely. Mark Lemon, Forster of the 'Examiner,' Mr. Dudley Costello, George Cruikshank, and Mrs. Cowden Clarke, and sundry artists, assisted; but Mr. Dickens was all in all. He toiled incessantly in the cause, and was the only good actor in the company; for although great correctness of appreciation was evident, the lack of use and of technical knowledge chilled parts of the performance very much."

The sensitiveness of some actors to any allusion respecting their profession is very remarkable. We were told by a friend who was present, that a tragedian celebrated for his pride and aversion to being considered an actor, was grievously vexed one evening at a dinner party. Seated next to him was a very

prosy antiquarian, who, mistaking our Roscius for a clergyman, by the solemnity of his countenance, began a long argument on the "stat nominis umbra" of Junius. After some discussion he quoted the old story of the king sending secretly for Garrick, to request his vigilance in discovering who the great unknown was. "Singular enough" (quoth the antiquarian to the actor) "just as Garrick was about to commence his performance, a note was given to him couched in words like these, and signed Junius :—"So the tyrant has commanded you to find out who I am! Mark me, *vagabond*,"—at this word the narrator, looking solemnly in the other's face, said, "alluding to his profession as an actor, which, by the statutes of England," &c. &c. The ghastly face of the tragedian may well be imagined.

We gladly quote another morcel of genuine, honest criticism, in her estimate of Jenny Lind. It shows that although our fair writer can be misled by her own feelings, she is determined not to be led captive by a popular cry.

"London is like a nest of singing-birds just now. Jenny Lind, Alboni, Grisi, and half a dozen more of only less note are trilling and twittering somewhere every night. The ecstatics are reserved for Jenny, whose very faults are exalted to the skies as peculiar, individual excellences. She is a very fascinating little syren, certainly ; and we can hardly blame the young men for falling in love with her graces and prettiness, which so set off and appreciate her sweet singing. But take the singing alone, and as a whole, it is, as an artistic performance, far inferior to some others ; though in certain *tours de force* Jenny is unrivalled as yet. When she crosses her arms on her breast, raises her pretty shoulders, fixes her eyes intensely on the audience, and gives forth a sustained note, higher in the clouds than

human organs could be expected to reach, we confess her power, and assent to all that her warmest admirers insist on. But the quality of her voice is comparatively poor; it does not compare in roundness and melody with Alboni's or with Castellan's, who has one of the best natural organs I have ever heard; while in scientific training Grisi is infinitely superior. Jenny's reputation is made up of many kinds of material, among which the gentle sweetness, and real kindness and simplicity of her character, bear their part. She has a pretty place at Brompton, which she calls home; and one of her neighbors there assured me that she was an angel of goodness. This character, her youth, her pleasant face and delicate appearance, all contribute, probably, to the enthusiasm of the public. Poor Grisi, so long a reigning favorite, is now convicted of the crime of growing old, and sings to scant houses, though she is a good actress, which Jenny will never be.

"Mademoiselle Alboni is two Jenny Linds rolled into one, for size of body, and power, and volume of voice. She reminds me a good deal of our old favorite Pico, who was never fully appreciated in New York."

Although we strongly suspect that some person has been hoaxing Mrs. Kirkland with the following story, we cannot help quoting it as a good illustration of that instinct which tells a crowned head that literature is a dangerous thing to all superstitions, however popular they may be:

"We were amused to hear that the Queen of England does not like literary people; that she excludes them as far as possible from the Court; and, in fact, considers having produced a book as equivalent to loss of caste. A person who had by dint of great science and ingenuity perfected a plan by means of which the public interest was essentially benefited, embodied the result of his studies in a

book, highly esteemed by the critics and the public. It was proposed by a certain lady at Court to present this gentleman, on the strength of his merit; but the Queen absolutely declined receiving him, *because* of his literary character. Some one suggested that he had served with honor in the army, upon which ground her Majesty consented to receive him. But the gentleman very properly declined appearing at Court on these terms; so that her Majesty was, after all, the only person presented in the affair. (Somebody says, there is hardly a magistrate that does not commit himself twice as often as he commits any one else.) But the Queen is only proving her legitimacy; for who ever heard of one of her family as a patron, or even an admirer of literature?"

We have the authority of one of the poet's own family for saying that Queen Victoria, the head of the Anglo-Saxon race, had never heard of Wordsworth till he was proposed to her for Poet-Laureate, on the death of Southey.

If this be really the fact, it seems only fair to infer that Her Majesty has had no education at all, for it evidences so deep an ignorance of other branches of learning, besides Belles-Lettres. It is scarcely possible to read a dozen volumes without some allusion to the great philosophical poet of the day, or else some quotation from his writings. A committee of the House of Lords should be formed to inquire into this point. We recommend Lord Brougham to follow up our suggestion.

Mrs. Kirkland's boldness we have before spoken of in terms of commendation. But what will the female aristocracy of England say to this?

"With a strong prepossession in favor of English beauty, and a notion that such an occasion as that of the drawing-room would

afford a fine field for the display of it, we have been disappointed in our search. Very few of the ladies we saw were more than comely; a large proportion fell behind even that. One beautiful woman there was, whom we were led to suppose to be the Marchioness of Douro, though we could not ascertain it. We were told that that lady, daughter-in-law of the Duke of Wellington, and the Duchess of Argyll, daughter of the Duchess of Sutherland, were the only conspicuously-beautiful women about the Court."

We would advise her not to put herself into the power of the infuriated "graces" of the British nobility. It is said that a profound judge of the female heart was told that two ladies of his acquaintance had quarrelled and abused each other so violently that a reconciliation was deemed hopeless! "Did they call each other ugly?" said he. "No," was the reply. "It 's all right—they 'll soon make it up," was the emphatic answer, and it proved so. Mrs. Kirkland has, therefore, no chance of pardon! We also feel for the Duchess of Sutherland and the Marchioness of Douro! Conspiracies will be hatched forthwith against their beauty! Possibly the fact of the Duchess of Sutherland being an extensive grandmother may plead in her behalf, but the lovely young Marchioness is doomed. It is not the first time that the latter has been the cause of a deadly report. Her maiden name was Lady Elizabeth Hay. When Lord Douro was courting her the wits said, that, like the Duke of Devonshire, he had got the "Hay Fever!"

Our readers must hold Mrs. Kirkland responsible for this bit of gossip, for mentioning Lady Douro!

The conventional elegance of the woman is sometimes too

strong for her kind heart and vigorous common sense, as witness this rhapsody:

"I can never forget the view in Kensington Gardens, as we stood on one side of the water, and looked far through the ancient groves upon snatches of rich sky beyond. The walks were alive with children and their attendants; boys were launching their gay boats upon the water, and watching their progress as the wind wafted the tiny sails here and there. Other boats were there, larger, for they held men; but still, more like the most delicate of the sea-shells than like boats of mortal mould. Below, Hyde Park was full of elegant equipages and equestrians, as well as throngs of people on foot; and that famous statue of the Duke, which afforded 'Punch' material for so many good jokes, stood out fair against the sky, overtopping the arched gateway towards Piccadilly, making, at least to those who associate it with the great events of 1815, no undignified feature in the landscape. Then on every side are palaces, and more parks, and more trees, and more water, and more people. A lovelier or more exciting circle of vision I do not expect to enjoy in this life, though Fate should lead me to the top of the Himmalehs, or to that 'peak of Darien' from which Cortes and his men 'stared at the Pacific!' A sense of the majesty of human life and human ability—of the goodness of God, and the accountability of man—filled my thoughts, and inspired my imagination as I gazed. Not but some painful considerations found place too—not but I was ever conscious of the truth, that much of this splendor is the result of an unjust and oppressive inequality of condition, in this land so favored of Heaven. I felt all this; but the scene as it was made an indelible impression, and I shall ever think of it as a model of what may be done, and, in our own country at least, without any of the attendant evils which

seem but too pertinaciously to dog the steps of whatever is best and most glorious in England, and especially in London."

It is not of Kensington Gardens or of the parks, that an American should think when writing of the British Empire; they are but a small and artificial part. Let them be contrasted with the coal mines of Barnsley, where men and women work naked, and where little children crawl on all-fours, harnessed to cars like the brutes of the fields; or else with Spitalfields, where the weavers may all pray that God had made them silkworms instead of men-worms! This is the reverse of the medal, and no writer should dare to give an impression of one side without the likeness of the other.

Let the Americans thank God heartily for all their blessings, but above all that they have no grandeur so appalling as that of England. While we are in the fault-finding vein with Mrs. Kirkland, let us name that, for a lady of the land of equality, there are occasional ebullitions of an artificial elevation we did not expect to meet with in an American and a republican. We must excuse it on the ground of her having been above a month in the old country. How true it is, "English communication corrupts American manners!"

"My dislike is to the class, rather than to any particular specimen of it. My objections relate principally to the disgustingness of such a presence at a time when one would possess one's soul; the perpetual vicinity of a vulgar mind when the very zest of the moment lies in forgetting all vulgar things; the ceaseless iteration of threadbare common-places, while the best powers of memory are tasked to call up its most precious hoardings. At first the in-

trusive gabble was the great annoyance; but the time came when the mere sight of that intensely meaningless face seemed always to find a bare nerve; and in the very Vatican I was more sensible of his presence than of that of the Apollo, on which he stood commenting in a way that made one feel wicked. I appeal to any reasonable soul for sympathy under such an annoyance as this. 'Ver fine ting dat! Tres bien! ah! ver fine ting! Two tousand year old! Dieu! qu'il fait chaud!' and so on and on and on—continual dropping.

"We feel it essential to be rid of the presence of servants when we would enjoy conversation at home, yet we provide for their constant presence when we go abroad for the highest kind of intellectual pleasure. A courier is at once more and less than a servant; his position is held to excuse both servility and insolence, and while he receives the wages of a lackey he takes the airs of a companion."

Mrs. Kirkland devotes six mortal pages to abolish the race of couriers! She advises everybody to learn French instead! This is a charming puff for the professors of the polite tongue. We are inclined to think it would considerably diminish the number of travellers!

We remember in our youth there was a great prejudice in England against the study of French. Some did not hesitate to attribute the growth of infidelity and rebellion to the use of that language in which Fenelon and Massillon had written. Not long ago a worthy old grandmother of a friend labored under the trifling delusion that nobody, not even a French person, was such a fool as not to understand English, more especially if it was spoken very loudly and distinctly. She caused no little merriment one day by an attempt to put her theory in practice.

Her daughters, who were well-educated women and spoke French, had been expecting a governess from Paris who did not speak a word of English. During their absence one afternoon the young foreigner arrived, a very pretty, timid Parisian girl, of about eighteen. The old lady, who knew of her coming, was anxious to be very kind to her, and, seeing she looked fatigued, resolved to persuade her to take a cup of strong tea, which she naturally concluded would refresh her amazingly. She therefore rang her bell, and ordered her servant to bring up the teakettle, which speedily made its appearance, bright as the copper sun and hissing like a serpent letting off its venom. When all was prepared the simple-minded old lady commenced the conversation by saying to the French damsel that she had better have a cup of tea. The poor girl looked bewildered, not understanding a word the other said. *You had better have a cup of tea, it will do you good!* A vague look of ignorance was the reply. The hostess resolved to put on a greater power of French, so emphasizing every word, and speaking very loud, she said: You—had—better—have—a cup—of tea. This not being attended with any better success, the "tea-persuader" resolved to suit the action to the word, so arming herself with the resplendent and steam-emitting kettle, she brandished it emphatically in the other's face, accompanying this pantomimic action with: "It—will—do—you—good!" in a louder and louder tone. The poor creature began now to grow alarmed, fearing the old lady was a maniac. She therefore rose from her seat, and kept retreating before the benevolent but energetic kettle-holder, and was commencing a loud scream, when the door opened and the two daughters entered and explained

the whole difficulty. We are afraid more serious disasters than this would flow from following out Mrs. Kirkland's theory in strange lands without couriers.

Passing from this digression, we observe our fair friend in another light—that of a politician; and here she shows her characteristic sagacity.

"It must be allowed that soldiers, puppets as they are, add much to the mere display of such occasions, and the presence of the various military bands is very enlivening; but when we think of our French brethren as being in the midst of a noble struggle for liberty, and desirous of founding their Republic on immutable principles, these soldiers are the most discouraging sight that meets our eyes. We are told that it would be exceedingly unsafe for France to be unarmed in the midst of the nations of Europe, who would be very likely to take advantage of her defenceless state; but without quoting the pacific wisdom of Mr. Cobden, who repudiates this barbarous and degrading notion, we reply, that no republic founded upon military force will stand. The idea of a republic is the result of the general progress of the world, which has outlived the monarchical age; further progress will as surely leave behind the idea of brute force. We shall never see a permanent government until we see one absolutely Christian. Christianity is immutable, uncompromising; and He who has said that by it alone the world shall be saved, will surely overturn, and overturn, and overturn, till mankind shall submit in truth, as they now do in profession, to the rule of Christ.

"Here lies our chief fear for the new French Republic. The accursed military spirit, which has been inbred in the people for generations, is still predominant; the bayonet may be wreathed with flowers, but it glitters through them; and the world applauds

the folly under the name of prudence. The men whose counsels have prevailed, though wise and good, are not in advance of their age, as were the founders of our Republic. Their sentiments are fine in the way of poetry, generosity, bravery; but fall far short of Christian principle, which recognises no modifying power in expediency, declines all compromise with the spirit of the world, sees no safety but in a rigid adherence to the law and to the testimony. Our hopes prophesy the best for France; our fears have been increased by a visit to Paris at this juncture. Every third man is a soldier; you are waked in the morning by the beat of the drum and the trumpet of cavalry; in every street is a *corps de garde*; if you ask the name of a fine building, ten to one you are told it is a *caserne* (barrack) or a military hospital. The public reliance is not on wisdom, on virtue, on justice, on the spirit of peace; but on fighting, a quickness to resent, and ability to revenge an injury. Herein is fatal weakness.

"The French are a nation of sentiments. Words are things to them."

All this is politically true, no doubt, and we echo the calm, common-sense method of her reasoning. But in the following description of Rachel's acting, we have a piece of painting as fine a composition as one of the old masters. It would be difficult to convey the image more perfectly to the mind than she has done in her simple but well-arranged phrases.

"But the most striking thing of this kind is the singing of the Marseillaise by Mademoiselle Rachel, and the enthusiasm of her audiences. She appears after the tragedy, in the simplest possible tragic drapery, majestic in simplicity; the voice is nothing, as a voice, but her declamation of the hymn is sublime. Her eye, her tones, her gestures, are passionate in the extreme; and at each

refrain she becomes a Pythoness, and her audience is spell-bound until the last word, when they burst forth in acclamations that rend the skies. For the last stanza she grasps the tri-color; she kneels before it; she clasps it to her bosom; she waves it with a frantic eagerness; and she carries her hearers with her throughout. It is a perfectly unique exhibition, and one which only a Rachel could make sublime, instead of ridiculous. Rachel is born for tragedy, and nothing else. We cannot possibly conceive of her ordering breakfast or cheapening a bonnet. A strictly classical drapery is her only wear, and she scorns the aid of silks aud spangles, and even of point lace and diamonds. Without being handsome, sbe fascinates the eye; perhaps she is scarcely even graceful; but her *pose* is perfect, and, when passion throws her into attitudes of such *abandon* as would certainly result in fatal awkwardness in less perfectly artistic hands, she is sure to recover herself without any apparent effort, and without a moment's break in the action. Thin to a fault, she is yet more like a statue than like a living woman, so completely is want of fulness of outline made up by taste in costume, and classic perfection of attitude. Rachel is not so much an actress as a great artist. Her voice is low, almost hoarse; but it is heard distinctly, even in a whisper. Her power is intellectual and sympathetic; it seems hardly subject to rules; yet we cannot doubt that it is the result of intense study. The Parisians appreciate her, and listen with breathless interest to speeches long enough to tire any audience less accustomed to French tragedy. It is observable, however, that Rachel, and other finished performers, have a way of hastening through those interminable speeches quite different from the declamatory style of our school-days, when we gave the 'Madame!' and 'Seigneur!' with such dignified emphasis. Rachel recites those passages in a tone almost of domestic familiarity. When she persuades, she uses not the theatrical but the family tone of persuasion; when she scolds, she does it as

naturally as can be, whether the sufferer be husband or papa. She has no stage tricks; takes no care of her braids or of her train, does not seem to know there is an audience in the house, even when they applaud her to the echo; and is, in short, the perfect artist who conceals all art. I class an evening with Rachel among the grand things of Europe, and her singing of the Marseillaise as almost the grandest thing she does."

We have, however, not space to follow our authoress through her tour, which is more valuable for the impression it records than for what she saw. We shall therefore conclude our notice of this part of her mental history by saying that she has formed —so far as our experience goes—a very fair estimate of the difference between the two grand divisions of the Anglo-Saxons, the English and the Americans. How often have we heard the conversations which compel intelligent and impartial lookers on to form this conclusion!

"Repudiation is but a minor item in the list of excuses for dislike; and if it could be visited upon those to whom it properly belongs, we should have nothing to say. But to insist on charging it upon the whole United States is simply a piece of stolid ill-temper. The English are, to be sure, proverbially slow in the reception of foreign ideas, and doggedly set against the value of new ones; but they could easily, if they were desirous of doing justice, come at some notion of the nature of our confederacy, and our State independence; and so lay repudiation at its proper door, instead of pretending to consider it the bantling of republicanism. But they are peculiarly sensitive in the region of the pocket, and as they can only get three or four per cent. for money at home, it must doubtless have been a cruel disappointment to find that there was any uncertainty attending the reception of ten or twenty from us. We ought to feel very patient under their anger about repudiation."

We cordially call the attention of American legislators to what their clear-headed countrywoman says about International Copyright.

"With regard to that particular sort of national dishonesty which systematically appropriates other men's property and means of living, because it happens to be of a kind easily stolen, I confess to an humbled silence under British objurgation. If anybody thinks that to write and publish a book which others read, is not creating a property on which the author has a right to depend as a means of subsistence, I cannot agree with him; and I have never yet seen an argument on the subject which convinced me that it was less dishonest to steal a book than a pair of shoes. If an author has no right to live by his works, a clergyman can have no claim on account of his public teaching, or a legislator because he devotes his time to debate and the preparation for it. People who perform intellectual labor must form the single exception to the law which appoints that men shall enjoy that place in society to which their ability and industry entitle them. So absurd an idea I cannot advocate, even for the sake of defending the land I love against the angry taunts of our English neighbors. They are right in despising the moral coarseness which can think a wrong justified by the ease with which it can be perpetrated. They are quite right in feeling that the American people ought not to be willing to be amused and instructed without rendering some equivalent, merely because the creditor is so placed that he has uo power to collect his dues. All that the American in England can say, when the sore subject is mentioned, is, that he hopes the day for such meanness is passing away. A higher general cultivation, and a nobler appreciation of the blessings and claims of mind, will undoubtedly set us right on this subject. May the time be not far distant!"

We now turn from this well-written work to her other productions, premising that the "Holidays Abroad" leaves on our mind the impression of a woman of admirable temper, good judgment, a keen perception of the comfortable and elegant—with a great predisposition to select the best side of a picture, which she draws with great power, contenting herself with a bare reference to the more unpleasant features. This, while it renders her books more acceptable to those who seek for amusement only, impairs their value considerably with those who read to reflect. There is likewise too little of that personal egotism or bonhommie which attaches a reader to a traveller. We hear nothing of her two companions. She is also deficient in the dramatic power which gives a subjective value to the author as a friend. We accompany her without interest, and part from her without regret. We cannot help thinking this is a serious defect in that style of writing, for however we may respect her judgment as a critic, we should like at the same time to feel a more glowing sympathy with the woman. We have before remarked upon her partiality for the English, to which we can possibly have no objection; but with regard to Mrs. Kirkland we have at times a strong belief that it partakes too much of a deferential feeling, which was very natural in the colonial state, but somewhat derogatory in a rival nation. We think we know enough of John Bull to be convinced of this, that nothing so entirely wins his esteem, and even affection, as to stand up manfully to your argument, whether it be carried on with blows or words, and if it be possible, he will honor and love you all the more for beating him.

Mrs. Kirkland occasionally has passages which are perfect

specimens of careful and fortunate composition; in general her style is natural, seldom rising into eloquence; there is a simplicity, however, about all her writings which impresses the reader very favorably. An author should bear in mind that every word has a certain value, just as a figure, and that, as in numerals, it has its importance more from its relative position than from its abstract or individual meaning.

Mrs. Kirkland's "New Home; Who 'll Follow?" is a vivid and complete sketch of real life. It is a singular and convincing proof how a woman of genius, using simple, unadulterated English, can surpass a clever artificial writer, with all his cockneyisms, grammatical distortions, and elaborate word-painting.

Let our readers take the following account of a breakfast in the "openings:"

"She soon after disappeared behind one of the white screens I have mentioned, and in an incredibly short time emerged in a different dress. Then taking down the comb I have hinted at, as exalted to a juxtaposition with the spoons, she seated herself opposite to me, unbound her very abundant brown tresses, and proceeded to comb them with great deliberateness; occasionally speering a question at me, or bidding Miss Irene (pronounced Ireen) 'mind the bread.' When she had finished, Miss Irene took the comb and went through the same exercise, and both scattered the loose hairs on the floor with a coolness that made me shudder when I thought of my dinner, which had become, by means of the morning's ramble, a subject of peculiar interest. A little iron 'wash-dish,' such as I had seen in the morning, was now produced; the young lady vanished—re-appeared in a scarlet Circassian dress, and more combs in her hair than would dress a belle for the court of St. James;

and forthwith both mother and daughter proceeded to set the table for dinner.

"The hot bread was cut into huge slices, several bowls of milk were disposed about the board, a pint bowl of yellow pickles, another of apple sauce, and a third containing mashed potatoes, took their appropriate stations, and a dish of cold fried pork was brought out from some recess, heated and re-dished, when Miss Irene proceeded to blow the horn.

"The sound seemed almost as magical in its effects as the whistle of Roderick Dhu; for, solitary as the whole neighborhood had appeared to me in the morning, not many moments elapsed before in came men and boys enough to fill the table completely. I had made sundry resolutions not to touch a mouthful; but I confess I felt somewhat mortified when I found there was no opportunity to refuse.

"After the 'wash-dish' had been used in turn, and various handkerchiefs had performed, not for that occasion only, the part of towels, the lords of creation seated themselves at the table, and fairly demolished in grave silence every eatable thing on it. Then, as each one finished, he arose and walked off, till no one remained of all this goodly company but the red-faced, heavy-eyed master of the house. This personage used his privilege by asking me five hundred questions, as to my birth, parentage, and education; my opinion of Michigan, my husband's plans and prospects, business and resources; and then said, 'he guessed he must be off.'"

We may also mention that the history of Mrs. Danforth is told in a manner which is nature's truth; the whole scene is vividly brought before us, and we know at once a shrewd mind is at work.

The nakedness with which nature reveals itself in these regions is amusingly told:

"To be sure, I had one damsel who crammed herself almost to suffocation with sweetmeats and other things which she esteemed very nice; and ate up her own pies and cake, to the exclusion of those for whom they were intended; who would put her head in at a door, with—'*Miss* Clavers, did you holler! I thought I *heered* a yell."

"And another who was highly offended because room was not made for her at table with guests from the city, and that her company was not requested for tea visits. And this latter high-born damsel sent in from the kitchen a circumstantial account *in writing*, of the instances wherein she considered herself aggrieved; well written it was, too, and expressed with much *naiveté*, and abundant respect. I answered it in a way which 'turneth away wrath.' Yet it was not long before this fiery spirit was aroused again, and I was forced to part with my country belle."

The next scene is infinitely comic:

"The lady greeted me in the usual style, with a familiar nod, and seated herself at once in a chair near the door.

"'Well, how do you like Michi*gan*?'

"This question received the most polite answer which my conscience afforded; and I asked the lady in my turn, if she was one of my neighbors?

"'Why, massy, yes!' she replied; 'don't you know me? I tho't everybody know'd me. Why, I 'm the school ma'am, Simeon Jenkins's sister, Cleory Jenkins.'

"Thus introduced, I put all my civility in requisition to entertain my guest, but she seemed quite independent, finding amusement for herself, and asking questions on every possible theme.

"'You 're doing your own work now, a'n't ye?'

"This might not be denied; and I asked if she did not know of a girl whom I might be likely to get.

"'Well, I don't know, I'm looking for a place where I can board and do chores myself. I have a good deal of time before school, and after I get back; and I didn't know but I might suit ye for a while.'

"I was pondering on this proffer, when the sallow damsel arose from her seat, took a short pipe from her bosom (not 'Pan's reedy pipe,' reader), filled it with tobacco, which she carried in her 'work pocket,' and reseating herself, began to smoke with the greatest gusto, turning ever and anon to spit at the hearth.

"Incredible again? alas, would it were not true! I have since known a girl of seventeen, who was attending a neighbor's sick infant, smoke the live-long day, and take snuff besides; and I can vouch for it, that a large proportion of the married women in the interior of Michigan use tobacco in some form, usually that of the odious pipe.

"I took the earliest decent opportunity to decline the offered help, telling the school-ma'am plainly, that an inmate who smoked would make the house uncomfortable to me.

"'Why, law!' said she, laughing; 'that's nothing but pride now: folks is often too proud to take comfort. For my part, I couldn't do without my pipe to please nobody.'"

The simple philosophy of the woods is charming, after the fish-blooded faith of which the Bank of England is the temple, the directors the apostles, and merchants the priests.

"'Mother wants your sifter,' said Miss Ianthe Howard, a young lady of six years' standing, attired in a tattered calico, thickened with dirt; her unkempt locks straggling from under that hideous

substitute for a bonnet, so universal in the western country, a dirty cotton handkerchief, which is used *ad nauseam* for all sorts of purposes.

"'Mother wants your sifter, and she says she guesses you can let her have some sugar and tea, 'cause you 've got plenty.'

"This excellent reason, ''cause you 've got plenty,' is conclusive as to sharing with your neighbors. Whoever comes into Michigan with nothing, will be sure to better his condition; but woe to him that brings with him anything like an appearance of abundance, whether of money or mere household conveniences. To have them, and not be willing to share them in some sort with the whole community, is an unpardonable crime. You must lend your best horse *qui que ce soit* to go ten miles over hill and marsh, in the darkest night, for a doctor; or your team to travel twenty after a 'gal;' your wheel-barrows, your shovels, your utensils of all sorts, belong, not to yourself, but to the public, who do not think it necessary even to *ask* a loan, but take it for granted. The two saddles and bridles of Montacute spend most of their time travelling from house to house a-man-back; and I have actually known a stray martingale to be traced to four dwellings two miles apart, having been lent from one to another, without a word to the original proprietor, who sat waiting, not very patiently, to commence a journey."

Mrs. Kirkland does not seem altogether to relish the joke, although she seems thoroughly aware of its comicality. She says:

"But the cream of the joke lies in the manner of the thing. It is so straight-forward and honest, none of your hypocritical civility and servile gratitude! Your true republican, when he finds that you possess anything which would contribute to his convenience,

walks in with, 'Are you going to use your horses *to-day*?' if horses happen to be the thing he needs.

"'Yes, I shall probably want them.'

"'O, well; if you want them——I was thinking to get 'em to go up north a piece.'

"Or perhaps the desired article comes within the female department.

"'Mother wants to get some butter: that 'ere butter you bought of Miss Barton this mornin.'

"And away goes your golden store, to be repaid perhaps with some cheesy, greasy stuff, brought in a dirty pail, with, 'Here 's your butter!'

"A girl came in to borrow a 'wash-dish,' 'because we 've got company.' Presently she came back: 'Mother says you 've forgot to send a towel.'

"'The pen and ink, and a sheet o' paper and a wafer,' is no unusual request; and when the pen is returned, you are generally informed that you sent 'an awful bad pen.'

"I have been frequently reminded of one of Johnson's humorous sketches. A man returning a broken wheel-barrow to a Quaker, with, 'Here' I 've broke your rotten wheel-barrow usin' on 't. I wish you 'd get it mended right off, 'cause I want to borrow it again this afternoon.' The Quaker is made to reply, 'Friend, it shall be done:' and I wished I possessed more of his spirit."

We are afraid our quotations are growing upon us, but we cannot resist copying the following scene. Of a truth, America has no more comic pencil than that wielded by the fair hand of Mary Clavers.

"He is quite an old settler, came in four years ago, bringing with him a wife who is to him as vinegar-bottle to oil cruet, or as

mustard to the sugar which is used to soften its biting qualities. Mrs. Doubleday has the sharpest eyes, the sharpest nose, the sharpest tongue, the sharpest elbows, and above all, the sharpest voice that ever 'penetrated the interior' of Michigan. She has a tall, straight, bony figure, in contour somewhat resembling two hard-oak planks fastened together and stood on end; and, strange to say! she was full five-and-thirty when her mature graces attracted the eye and won the affections of the worthy Philo. What eclipse had come over Mr. Doubleday's usual sagacity when he made choice of his Polly, I am sure I never could guess; but he is certainly the only man in the wide world who could possibly have lived with her; and he makes her a most excellent husband.

"She is possessed with a neat devil; I have known many such cases; her floor is scoured every night, after all are in bed, by the unlucky scrubber, Betsey, the maid of all work; and woe to the unfortunate 'indifiddle,' as neighbor Jenkins says, who first sets dirty boot on it in the morning. If men come in to talk over road business, for Philo is much sought when 'the public' has any work to do; or school-business, for that being very troublesome, and quite devoid of profit, is often conferred upon Philo—Mrs. Doubleday makes twenty errands into the room, expressing in her visage all the force of Mrs. Raddle's inquiry, '*Is* them wretches going?' And when at length their backs are turned, out comes the bottled vengeance. The sharp eyes, tongue, elbow, and voice, are all in instant requisition.

"'Fetch the broom, Betsey! and the scrub-broom, Betsey! and the mop, and that 'ere dish of soap, Betsey; and why on earth didn't you bring some ashes? You didn't expect to clean such a floor as this without ashes, did you?'—'What time are you going to have dinner, my dear?' says the imperturbable Philo, who is getting ready to go out.

"'Dinner! I 'm sure I don't know! there's no time to cook dinner in this house! nothing but slave, slave, slave, from morning till night, cleaning up after a set of nasty, dirty, &c. &c. 'Phew,' says Mr. Doubleday, looking at his fuming helpmate with a calm smile, 'it 'll all rub out when it 's dry, if you 'll only let it alone.'

"'Yes, yes; and it would be plenty clean enough for you if there had been forty horses in here.'"

But the crowning joke of borrowing is contained in the following request:

"We were in deep consultation one morning on some important point touching the well-being of this sole object of Mrs. Doubleday's thoughts and dreams, when the very same little Ianthe Howard, dirty as ever, presented herself. She sat down and stared awhile without speaking, *à l'ordinaire;* and then informed us that her mother 'wanted Miss Doubleday to let her have her baby for a little while, 'cause Benny's mouth 's so sore, that'—— but she had no time to finish the sentence.

"'LEND MY BABY!!!'—and her utterance failed."

It reminds us of an indignant message once sent by a loving papa, who was very fond of his firstborn. Coming home from store one evening in full expectation of nursing his darling production, he was annoyed to find that some young ladies, next door, had borrowed it to exhibit to some of their friends. As this had frequently happened, he sent for it back and desired his servant would say: "That Mr. Billings requested the young ladies would get a baby of their own, and not borrow his in future!"

From this specimen of Michigan manners, so vividly given,

we come to a tale charmingly told. We have seldom met with a romance so Arcadian as that of Cora Mansfeld. As the young ladies would say: "It is a love of a tale."

Nor is Mrs. Kirkland behind in a knowledge of what constitutes a patriot. Her description is so graphic that we cannot resist the temptation to enrich our pages with it.

"From this auspicious commencement may be dated Mr. Jenkins's glowing desire to serve the public. Each successive election-day saw him at his post. From eggs he advanced to pies, from pies to almanacs, whiskey, powder and shot, foot-balls, playing-cards, and at length, for ambition ever 'did grow with what it fed on,' he brought into the field a large turkey, which was tied to a post and stoned to death at twenty-five cents a throw. By this time the still youthful aspirant had become quite the man of the world; could smoke twenty-four cigars per diem, if anybody else would pay for them; play cards in old Hurler's shop from noon till day-break, and rise winner; and all this with suitable trimmings of gin and hard words. But he never lost sight of the main-chance. He had made up his mind to serve his country, and he was all this time convincing his fellow-citizens of the disinterested purity of his sentiments."

We strongly incline to the belief that Mrs. Kirkland would excel in a romance of real life, laying the scene in the present times. Her eye is keen and retentive; her style infinitely superior to Thackeray or Dickens; and if she be somewhat deficient in imagination, let her reflect how wonderfully the latter has managed without that rare faculty. That she has invention we feel assured, although she has not yet given her attention to works which favor its development. She has admirable

good sense; a true womanly taste, without any sickly, "fine-lady sentimentalism;" and that instinct—almost as rare a gift as genius—which counsels how far she can proceed in the coloring of a fact without trenching on the realm of caricature. What bombast is in poetry—distortion in sculpture and painting—ranting in elocution—buffoonery in acting—quackery in medicine—charlatanism in politics—even so caricature is in writing. It resembles genius just as the monkey resembles man!—not a likeness, but a living caricature.

Our limits will not allow us a further examination of her other writings. They display the same merits and defects. Her "Forest Life" has some beautiful pieces of description, both of men and nature. There is a health about her productions which gives promise of a long life.

JARED SPARKS.

It is a peculiar fact in the literature of America that while deficient in poetical genius, she boasts three historians not unworthy to be matched with the greatest of their contemporaries. This is no new opinion, for it has been remarked by an eminent authority in England that Bancroft, Prescott, and Jared Sparks, are among the first writers of the age. We have endeavored to justify this assertion in our review of Prescott's works. We now proceed to a consideration of the historical claims of the author of "The Life of Washington," and in our next shall devote part of our space to Mr. Bancroft's writings. We must not forget that the latter has had advantages not extended to his brother historians.

As we have in a previous part of this volume explained somewhat our theory of the manner in which History should be written, we shall at once proceed to the consideration of Mr. Sparks's labors. Biography and history differ materially in one respect, viz. the spirit in which they should be written. The biographer should have a certain love for his hero, a kind of household feeling; but the historian should sit like Jove on

Olympus, out of the turmoil of the conflict, and above the disturbing influence of those clouds which distort and interrupt "the vision, and the faculty divine" of truly judging of events. It is of course understood, that while we expect the biographer to take a personal interest in the subject of his memoir, we do not wish him to become either the apologist of his errors or the propagator of his opinions; we only require a generous sympathy with the great objects of his life, and a forbearing judgment when he goes astray. There are certain grand elements in our nature which are far removed from the sphere of political and religious bigotries, and these are so broadly marked as to render an offence against them palpable to all. This is the only basis on which one man can condemn another. The elements we mean are those comprehended in the pure humanity of man. A man has a perfect right to be a republican or a monarchist; to be of any religion his conscience dictates. He is lord and master of his creed and opinion. If he acts consistently with these rules of faith, none dare blame him; but when he violates truth, honor, humanity, purity, then he comes under the just condemnation of his fellow man; he puts himself out of the human family when he becomes cruel, unjust, false, or even ungenerous.

In history the narrator should regard the great law of progress. This should be the compass by which he steers his course. He should look at an event not so much by itself as in conjunction with others. In the most successful campaign all is not victory; many a step backward, apparently, may be the forerunner of a permanent advance; the sum total must be regarded, and not isolated items "in the great account." Now

Mr. Sparks has, in his writings, combined the excellences of both systems, and while he has written of his hero with a deep feeling of appreciation, he has likewise taken into consideration his historical value. In his life of the great founder of this republic, he has avoided the common error of considering George Washington as a Fourth of July Orator, and treated him as a lover of human freedom, not an actor surrounded with drums, trumpets, and penny crackers, but a lofty-minded man, armed with the noblest attributes of the patriot hero. Sparks is one of the few writers who have presented Washington in that pure simplicity of character which renders him one of the greatest men that have ever been known to their fellow creatures. We always apply involuntarily to him these lines of Wordsworth on Milton:

"His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart!
He had a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So did he travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness, and yet his heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay!"

It is somewhat out of time here, but we have thought that the picture presented by Washington retiring from the arduous struggle of having achieved his country's freedom, and then returning to his farm, resuming all his old labors, is one of the finest in the human gallery, infinitely distancing the hacknied example of Cincinnatus to which it has been so often compared. When the difference of times and manners is taken into account, there is little comparison between them.

There is also another light in which Mr. Sparks may claim

distinguished notice, and that is the selection of his subjects. In this particular he is infinitely more national than either Bancroft or Prescott. He is truly the American biographical historian; as we said before, he combines the two systems. His Life of Washington is a great historical picture, where the *national* events of the chief actor's life are so admirably grouped that he seems, in his natural position, just as in a drama, where the history moves around the man, as in the Wallenstein of Schiller, and the Richard the Third of Shakspeare.

It perhaps requires a more philosophical mind to write history properly, and a more dramatic one for biography. In the former so much more must be considered, so many more persons sketched, their relative positions examined, their importance weighed, with no undue influence given to any. The comprehensiveness and nicety of this great labor can scarcely be overestimated; it requires the possession of a very rare mind, for how seldom is it possible to weigh a ton and an ounce in the same scales, and yet the historian should be able to estimate the nation and the man!

In the Life of Franklin we have another proof of Mr. Sparks's fitness for the work he has chosen. While in that of Washington we had a picture of the harmonious union of the patriot, warrior, and statesman, formed upon the only sure basis of the Christian gentleman, we have, in the biography of the great printer, as admirable a likeness of the patriot philosopher combined with the legislator. What one did from loftiness of soul the other did from a love of utility. One looked at his work with the serene principle of duty, the other with the dis-

passionate eye of practical philosophy. Both had the good of their country as their leading motive; but one acted more from the heart, and the other from the head. Washington's actions sprang from impulse, the other's from reflection. Both were equally inflexible; one from the integrity of his heart, the other from the soundness of his head. In drawing this parallel let it not for an instant be understood that we deny a head to Washington or a heart to Franklin. We only point out this distinction as the governing principle of their conduct. One said, I *feel* I ought to do it; the other said, I *think* I will.

It is in this identity with his subject that Mr. Sparks is the unrivalled head of American biography; indeed, we do not know of any who is superior to him in the literature of England. Some biographers, when they write the life of a hero, forget Columbus was the grandest of discoverers, by the most magnificent enthusiasm that ever stirred the human imagination, and in like manner transmogrify Mahomet into a tame adventurer. The truth is, these wonderful men were the embodiments and exponents of the leading feature of the age they lived in, and so far from creating the storm, they merely rode upon it as the chief objects. Some lean to the belief that the man makes the epoch; others that the epoch makes the man. Possibly the truth may lie between in this, as in many other things, and the fact prove they were made for each other. Doubtless, when a vague idea is floating in the imaginations of men, some one more charged with the spirit of that particular thought may grasp it, and become the conductor of that electric shock which is to shatter the tottering superstitions of the world.

It no doubt sometimes occurs that men who have carried out

a theory to its remotest practice, would have started aghast had the ultimate result been suddenly presented to their "mind's eye." Like John Gilpin, they have been carried away by their steed, and compelled by the brute force of a popular revolution to dine at Ware, when they only set out to spend a day at Edmonton, with their wife, some favorite theory. However homely this illustration may be, it has been forced upon us by a close study of the characters of many of the most celebrated disturbers of the human race. A poet one day called these men human yeast.

It may, however, possibly happen that they themselves become quickened with the spirit of progress as they ride on; and as the path widens, future objects may present themselves as the necessary consequence of their first advance. This should be always borne in mind when we feel disposed to blame the extreme lengths to which some of the most celebrated men have been hurried by the force of circumstance.

Few men deserve more consideration in this respect than Napoleon. If there was ever a man justified by the necessities of his position, it was the great Emperor of the French. Many are inclined to blame his pertinacious hatred to England, and to sagely conclude that had he confined his ambition to reasonable bounds, he would have lived and died the ruler of France. This would have been true had Napoleon been only a great man of the common-place order, but, unfortunately for himself, he was the most original genius of his age. He had, therefore, instincts which counselled him more strongly and unerringly than the concentrated every-day good sense of the world. This mute god revealed to him that he was the apostle

of a creed which must be spoken through his mouth, although to his own destruction; and, like the Pythoness of old, he had no free choice in the matter. The presentiment of a great man becomes in time invariably his superstition, and we offer the constantly recurring prediction of Napoleon as to the Omnipotence of Destiny, as an illustration of our remark, and as an explanation of his own fate. There is more grandeur in the Exile on the Rock of St. Helena than in the Emperor on the Throne of the Tuileries; and we think that Napoleon did more for human liberty when apparently the chained exile of that lonely pinnacle of despair, than when he was the diademed monarch of France.

Prometheus in fetters, dying 'neath the vulture, speaks to the world for ever in the Greek of Æschylus. Jove himself is vulgarized and dwarfed by the sublime fortitude of his victim, the Fire Stealer. Even so does the dethroned and vanquished victor of tyranny speak to all nations through the voice of history.

Had Napoleon died monarch of France, he had been vulgarized for ever. He would have been dumb to the world of liberty, save through the French tongue; and the Goddess of Freedom, we are afraid, will never listen to that language. But his martyrdom on the solitary rock gave him a key to the heart of every Anglo-Saxon, and they took up his mission, which was to destroy the clay idol set up by a legitimate Nebuchadnezzar for the worship of the world. Thus their sympathy first enlisted them in the cause, and since then the great social Alcides has cleansed the Augean Stables of tyranny through the agency of his former foes. Had Prometheus not been a tortured captive,

Æschylus had never made him the Hero of Endurance; and had Napoleon escaped that majestic doom of despair—

"Dying death stiffened in that mute embrace,"

he would only have been a successful adventurer, a nine days' wonder, and the founder of a race of tyrants who would themselves in time have become legitimate, and required another Napoleon to overthrow. Let the majestic shade of the departed Corsican rejoice over the transient evil of the last few years of his mortal life, and thank the "Triple Fates" that he was snatched from a throne on which so many fools and despots had died, to be placed on the loftiest pedestal ever awarded to a human being. The truth of a great creed is testified by the suffering of its founder, and not by the success of his earthly mission. While the Crescent of the victorious Mahomet is fading every day from the heavens, the Cross of the Galilean is rapidly becoming the symbol of the world.

The mission of Napoleon is the grandest human theme ever presented to the imagination of a poet. We can faintly conceive how, in the times to come, when some future Milton presents him in an Epic, or some Shakspeare in a dramatic shape, the admiring audience will look upon him as belonging to a nobler species than the human race; and how in the solemn temple of their souls they will execrate that nation for whom he died, in emancipating from the thraldom of the dancing master and the tax-gatherer. It may possibly bestow upon Great Britain the dignity of its hatred. While we are on the subject of the two Prometheuses, we may possibly be excused by the reader for preserving a remark of Browning's. We had

been conversing (seated on the green hills of Surrey, at whose foot this great poet resided, with his father, mother, and only sister, before his marriage with Miss Barrett) upon Napoleon, Prometheus, and other eminent sufferers. Browning grew warm on the subject, and pointed out a curious passage of the Prometheus Vinctus, which he said was not only the foundation of Napoleon's creed, but also a prophecy or foreshadow of the Christian Trinity.

This (the author of Sordello maintained) was a singular proof of the ghostly or shadowy evidence, which the "cloud of witnesses" gave in favor of these mysteries.

We have endeavored by these general remarks to give a better idea of the excellence of Mr. Sparks's biographies than by any extracts from his writings. Who could convey to the beholder the idea of a forest by presenting an elaborate isolated tree? Let this simile excuse our rather dealing in generalities when we talk of Mr. Sparks's biographies. It is very often the test of an undue and unartistic attention to parts, correspondent to a neglect of the whole, when a critic is enabled to present the reader with a convincing specimen of the genius of the artist. This really is the exact truth in the present case. All is equally well finished; there is nothing striking about a feature or limb, but the face or the form is beautiful. Who would think of cutting off a nose or plucking out an eye, and presenting these mutilations as convincing evidences of beauty? We cannot help carrying on the parallel by remarking that the very isolation deprives each organ of sight and smell, and ignores at the same time the delights of vision and perfume. What be-

comes of the beauty of a landscape or a lady, or the perfume of a hay-field or a rose?

These remarks apply the more especially to the author now under review, for there is a symmetrical proportion about all his works which evidences the artist. We could instance many writers who elaborate their sentences more thoroughly, and present far more finished and striking passages for the reader's special attention; but we know few authors who preserve so much proportion in their figures, and so much propriety in the grouping. The attention and labor are equally distributed, and it is only when the entire picture is viewed that the full merit of the painter is recognised; then all examination of detail is forgotten in admiration of the *tout ensemble.* We remember a curious fact, related by a celebrated portrait painter, which confirmed this opinion strongly. He selected from the most celebrated beauties of the day the most perfect feature of each face, and exhausted his skill in forming them into one which he naturally thought would be the perfection of loveliness: he was disappointed to find the result a decided common-place, meaningless countenance, devoid of either grace or expression. This is only what he might have expected: beauty is harmony or congruity; his model portrait was an incongruity.

Our space will not allow us to give sufficient quotations from Mr. Sparks to illustrate our assertion; indeed, as we said before, it would be unjust to do so. He has no pet passages, no short episodes, which shine out from the rest, and placed there as though purposely for samples—all is consistent and symmetrical. A poet or a traveller abounds with passages which can

be detached without any loss of vitality or beauty; but in a sustained work, like the Biographies of Washington and Franklin, it would be as absurd to select occasional sentences to convince a doubting reader, as to present a bucket of sea-water in order to convey a notion of the Atlantic!

THE END.

THE END.

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MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Powell, Thomas

The living authors of America

New York 1850

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